GMA says destabilizers behind kidnapping spree

Story below, Col. 1

Stop tempting Noli, Malacañang told

By Armand N. Nocum and Juliet L. Javellana

A CIVIL SOCIETY leader has prescribed advice for President Macapagal-Arroyo: "Stop tempting" Sen. Noli de Castro to run

STORY, A12

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Taiwan vice president, minister denied RP visas NEWS/A3
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Investors foresee big budget deficit

Peso touches 55.70 to $, recovers to 55.56

ECONOMIC HEADACHE. A trader gets a scalp massage from a colleague on the trading floor of the Philippine Stock Exchange on Monday. ARNELL HAWARD

WINNING FORM

World boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao shows off his fighting form to President Macapagal during a courtesy call at Malacañang where he was awarded a Presidential Medal of Merit and P1 million in cash on Monday. (Story in Metro, Page A1/1)

By Clarissa S. Batino and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE PESO briefly traded yesterday at 55.70 to the US dollar, just a touch stronger than its all-time low of 55.75, in the wake of the resignation of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, which fueled fears of a much bigger budget deficit and massive election spending.

Camacho, whose skill in negotiating international bond deals and partial success in capping a widening budget deficit had won him market plaudits, said on Friday he was quitting at the end of November because he was exhausted with the job.

In their first reaction to the announcement, traders dumped the peso yesterday morning, sending it to its lowest level against the dollar since the political turmoil surrounding the ouster of President Joseph Estrada in January 2001.

The peso closed at P55.50, slightly stronger than Friday's record closing low of P55.585 as investors took profit after traders spotted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas selling dollars in the morning. Despite the modest recovery, the peso remained the worst-performing currency in the region on a year-to-date basis after having shed 3.6 percent since the start of the year.

"Camacho's resignation must be seen in the context of the run-up to the May 2004 presidential election," an American investment bank said.

JP Morgan, one of the world's biggest money managers, said his "resignation heightens suspicions that the deficit may widen in early 2004."

It said revenue collection reforms were not significant enough to reduce the budget deficit. JP Morgan expects the budget deficit to hit P220 billion this year, P18 billion more than the Department of Finance's forecast of P202 billion.

"Politics has become the central focus in the Philippines (since mid-July) and with that focus getting only more intense in the months ahead, to hindsight, Camacho's resignation makes sense," JP Morgan said.

Camacho had expressed frustration with Congress, which treated him poorly and sat on crucial revenue enhancement bills that could rein in the budget deficit.

"Investors have at times questioned Camacho's credibility in terms of reining in the country's chronic budget deficit problems, with 2002 a low point for Camacho, but his integrity as a technocrat policy maker was never in doubt. As a result, politicians did not find him easy to work with," JP Morgan said.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor

BSP STORY, A2

GMA says destabilizers in kidnaps

By Juliet L. Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday raised the stakes in the recent kidnapping spree, saying kidnap-for-ransom gangs were out to destabilize the political order.

"There could be a destabilization aspect in these events and we are monitoring it closely," Mr Macapagal said in a statement yesterday.

Her view was echoed by the spokesperson of the Philippine National Police. The violent manner by which kidnap groups abducted three victims in one week indicated they may be out to destabilize the Macapagal administration, Director Ricardo de Leon said.

"Normally, the modus operandi in

STORY, A12

Aksyon, Reporma, Promdi seal political alliance

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SIX days before he is expected to be officially proclaimed a presidential candidate by his supporters in a convention, Raul Roco has yet to get a running mate and complete his senatorial lineup.

At the formal launching yesterday of his alliance with his former rivals in the 1998 presidential race, Renato de Villa of Reporma and Emilio "Lito" Osmeña of Promdi, Roco said he had a "short list" of nominees for his running mate.

He named Senate President Franklin Drilon, Senators Noli de Castro, Loren Legarda, Vicente Sotto III and Manuel Villar, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, Dr Vilma and Osmeña.

The talk in Roco's camp is that he is seriously eyeing Villar, since all the others had already made their preferences known.

Dr Villa told reporters yesterday that he was being asked to run, but did not say for what position. He said he had yet to make up his mind.

Osmeña, a former Cebu governor, said he was definitely not running next year for any position.

Roco, who heads Aksyon Demokratiko, did not categorically say

SECOND A6

'MANAGEMENT SKILLS'

Don't underestimate FPJ, says Peping

By Christian V. Esguerra

ACTOR Fernando Poe Jr. is "not stupid (stupid) like people think," former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco said yesterday.

"He's in fact intelligent. He's got substance," Cojuangco said, following the revelation by Pastor "Boy" Saycon of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa) that the former congressman was keen on throwing his support behind Poe's possible presidential candidacy.

"I know these things because Fpe known him for a very long time," said Cojuangco, youngest brother of former President Corazon Aquino.

Poe has been his friend since 1958 when the actor supported his candidacy in the mayoralty race in Pasupil, Tarlac, according to Cojuangco. Since then, he said he has known Poe to be "honest and honorable," characteristics that would set him apart from traditional politicians.

"The problem is that people are saying too many nasty things about him this early," the former lawmaker said. "Why don't we just give him a chance and see what he can do?"

Asked about Poe's reported invitation to his wife, Margarita "Daig Ting" Co-

SECOND A6

Tabang's Ben: Jesuits' loss lumad's gain

By Ma. Corea P. Dapo

THE STORY of his life is veritable stuff for a telenovela. Searching for meaning, taking the road less-traveled, finding the light among a usually forgotten people—this is straight out of a divine design that has yet to fully unravel. It fills him with awe and thanksgiving.

Benjamin "Ben" Abadiano, 48, has been described as a "rare species" in that part of the wilderness where genuine concern for the neglected is alien to those who wield political power.

Ben is Asian Development Foundation Inc.'s (ADFI) consultant for Tabang Mindanao (a humanitarian project instituted by multi-sectoral groups for Mindanao's "largely forgotten citizens") and new program coordinator for peace building. He is also the founder and moving force behind Rawan Center for Peace and Sustainable Development.

Minus the titles and the groups he represents, Ben is still a remarkable Filipino and Christian—organizer, inspirer, trainer, educator, troubleshooter, dreamer, short A man for others.

Ben grew up with grandparents who loved him dearly and gave him pretty much everything he needed. In one of his vacations at Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City, he saw a burning commitment to the Indigenous peo-

TABANG'S BEN

People power in Georgia topples Shevardnadze

TBILISI, Georgia—Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze was swept out of power on Sunday, stepping aside without bloodshed after a decade of mounting discontent and three weeks of protests over parliamentary elections that his critics said exemplified the corruption that had plagued the former Soviet republic during his reign.

Some 50,000 demonstrators sang, swung flags and jumped for joy outside the parliament building, the focal point of the cascade of events that culminated in Shevardnadze's sudden resignation as protesters threatened to storm his residence.

"I realized that what is happening may end with spilled blood if I use my rights" to employ force against the protesters, said Shevardnadze, who for weeks had rejected opposition demands that he step down in the wake of a Nov. 2 parliamentary vote that was widely condemned as marred by fraud.

"The president has accomplished a courageous act," said opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili, head of the National Movement who was the loudest voice calling for Shevardnadze's resignation. (See related story in The World, Page A8.)

By the time the 75-year-old Shevardnadze resigned, some newsmen had joined the protest crowds and it was unclear

PEOPLE, A6

A FAMILIAR sight to Filipinos — opposition supporters, waving old and modern Georgian flags, celebrate the resignation of Georgian President Shevardnadze near his residence in Tbilisi on Sunday. AP

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

4 solons set to follow Drilon to LP

By Michael Lim, Christine Avendaño, Juliet Javellana and Cynthia Balana

FOUR more senators are set to join the Liberal Party after Senate President Franklin Drilon decided to sign up with the party, Sen. Francis Pangilinan said yesterday.

Pangilinan, chair of LP's national organizing committee, said the party had formally extended an invitation to the members of the so-called Wednesday Group who, aside from himself, are Senators Edgardo Angara, Manuel Villar, Ralph Recto and Nikki Coseteng.

Pangilinan, who is tasked to recruit members for the party, said the response of his four colleagues has been positive and talks are to continue "till all these signified openness."

Pangilinan predicted that more prominent national leaders would shift their allegiance to the LP because of the "grand tradition" and its adherence to "the values of freedom and democracy which the Filipino people cherish deeply."

Drilon, who bolted the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino during the impeachment of former President Joseph Estrada, is set to formally join the LP on Nov. 28.

Drilon yesterday confirmed he is joining the LP to be its chair and would take his oath before LP president Senator Sen. Florencio Abad on Friday, which is also his 58th birthday.

In a news conference, Drilon said he was joining the party because he was "comfortable" with the people there and many members of his regional party in Western Visayas, the Lipon party, belong to the LP. Drilon chairs the Lipon party.

"It's a grand old party with a rich tradition of principled politics," Drilon said of the party founded in 1946 by President Manuel Roxas and whose prominent members included former Senators Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and Jovito Salonga, and former Presidents Diosdado Macapagal.

In a statement, Pangilinan described Drilon as a "big catch" for the LP as he believed that his entry would bolster the party's standing in next year's elections.

"Senate President Drilon brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge, as well as a formidable track record in public service," said Pangilinan.

LP leaders, however, were still divided on whom to support in the 2004 elections.

According LP officials disclosed that during a straw vote by 34 LP congressmen on the second week of October, the party was divided between supporting former Sen. Raul Roco and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"LP will have to break its ties with the PPC and the President's ruling Lakas-CMD party should LP members decide to support Roco," said the source.

Pangilinan admitted that Drilon could have persuasive influence over the party "But in the end the members of the party will make the decision and that should be before the end of the month," Pangilinan stressed.

Ms Macapagal has been named honorary chair of LP with former Senate President Jovito Salonga as chair emeritus.

Although Ms Macapagal is the honorary LP chair, she is not necessarily going to be LP's standard-bearer, Abad and Aquino said in separate statements.

"That is not automatic. She was given the honorific title only because her father was president of the Liberal Party so just conferred it on her to honor them for," Abad said yesterday.

Abad said the LP is considering either Ms Macapagal or Roco, while Aquino said other LP members were considering either Roco, Sen. Francisco Tatad or former Senator Pio Pio de.

As this developed, five LP stalwarts yesterday declared their support for the President in the May 2004 elections.

The five were Manila Rep. Rodolfo Bacani, LP secretary general, Barbara, Defense Secretary and LP executive director Eleonor Quiros.

The five, however, stressed that their support was preliminary since the 25 LP congressmen in the House of Representatives will still meet next week to draw up a final declaration of support.

GMA: Get drug lords backing candidates

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency to go after drug lords funneling money into the war chests of politicians running in next year's elections.

In a statement, Ms Macapagal said: "One of the reasons we are going down hard on drug syndicates is to check their prospective influence on the elections next year. We cannot allow criminals to interfere in the democratic process or put their puppets in power."

The anti-drug campaign, she stressed, "will be nonpartisan and non-selective."

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President was only acting on reports that "some unscrupulous elements engaged in the drug trade are already placing their bets on some political candidates."

Although no names were mentioned, Bunye said the Palace would reveal the identities of the candidates benefiting from the drug lords' largesse once the PDEA wrapped up its investigation and filed cases against the politicians.

Bunye said the new not to complacent on the sources of campaign funds of the President's rivals. "Drug operations are illegal and immoral per se and, if true, the means corruption is tempting to through unstable money," he said. Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., AFP

Solons reviving 'Pidal' inquiry

THE 10-MEMBER majority bloc in the Senate is moving to revive the Jose Pidal inquiry without the participation of the blue ribbon committee chaired by Sen. John Arroyo.

Last night, in what may be seen as a way of strengthening the minority's hand, the Senate reaffirmed the election of opposition Sen. Teofisto Aquino Guingona Jr. as chairman of the blue ribbon committee despite Arroyo's efforts to block her entry.

But Arroyo said he would defend his decision to derail the Pidal inquiry.

Sen. Sergio Osmeña III said after a meeting (secret) yesterday that the majority bloc had decided to support his call to continue the Jose Pidal inquiry "to its up lesse ends."

The inquiry, which was looking into corruption allegations against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, by Sen. Panfilo Lacson, was suspended indefinitely last month after Arroyo Arroyo asked Lacson to provide more evidence to back his charges.

But opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said all the members of the three committees concerned had to do so to "decide by majority vote to overrule Senator Arroyo."

Osmeña, on the other hand, said reporters that his banks committee and Aquino's constitutional amendments panel could hold a joint hearing on the controversy since Lacson's privilege speech against the First Gentleman was referred to all three committees.

But Senate President Franklin Drilon said the blue ribbon committee remained the best panel in the inquiry under the rules.

"It's not that there are three committees and two would be the majority," Drilon said. "It is the membership of the committees that will decide on these issues." Christine O. Avendaño

Taiwan VP, exec denied RP visas

By Jovena Aving

TWO top officials of Taiwan, who were invited to attend two-day trade chat in some today in Manila, were denied travel visas by the Philippine government.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople told reporters in an ambush interview that no visas would be issued to Taiwan's Vice President Annette Lu and Foreign Minister Eugene Chien in line with the country's "One China policy."

Ople said that only Taiwan's economic minister, Lin Yi-fu, would be allowed to travel to the Philippines to attend the conference.

"Visas would only be issued to Taiwanese officials who want to come here for economic cooperation and nothing political," Ople said.

China regards Taiwan as a renegade province and seeks to isolate it diplomatically from the Philippines and other countries which recognize China, however, continue to maintain economic and cultural ties with Taiwan.

"The leaders of Taiwan have a clear idea of our policy and I do not anticipate that they would take any action that would place the Philippines in a different or compromising position," Ople said in a statement.

"There is no change in policy. The Philippines adheres to the One-China policy," Ople said.

Lu, Chien and Lin were earlier invited to the Asia Overseas Affairs Federation and the 20th Taiwan-Business Council meetings which begin today and end on Friday.

They had also sought meetings with President Macapagal-Arroyo and Ople.

The Agence France-Presse earlier reported that China's ambassador to the Philippines had warned the country against admitting Lu and other Taiwanese officials.

Chinese Ambassador to Manila Wang Chongqui called on Ople last week and warned that bilateral ties could suffer if the Lu visit were allowed, sources who asked not to be identified told AFP at the weekend.

But Ople said there are clear guarantees in the One-China policy.

"It's often incumbent upon us to reiterate policies once in a while in order to avoid confusion. Clearly the visit of these officials would not be consistent with the (One-China) policy," Ople said.

He added: "We are very interested in transacting with Taiwan. But our contacts with them, as a matter of policy, shall be limited to economic, trade, tourism and cultural and cultural encompass political and security matters." With an AFP report

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 25, 2003
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rv 5:1-10
Gospel: Lk 21:5-11

While some people were talking about the Temple, remarking that it was adorned with fine stonework and rich gifts, Jesus said to them, "The days will come when these shall not be left one stone upon stone, to all of which you now admire; all will be torn down." And they asked him, "Master, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?"

Jesus then said, "Take care not to be deceived, for many will come claiming my title and saying, 'I am he,' the Messiah,' the time is at hand.' Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened; for all this must happen first, even though the end is not to come."

And Jesus said, "Nations will fight each other and kingdoms will oppose kingdoms. There will be great earthquakes, famines and plagues; in many places strange and terrifying signs from heaven will be seen. Commentary:

"While some people were talking about the Temple, remarking that it was adorned with fine stonework and rich gifts ..." The temple is only a building of stone and can be demolished. Jesus who will rise from the dead knows that the true temple of our life and salvation is destroyed. Christianity has built beautiful cathedrals and churches, but its real beauty and value have to be found in people's heart. We may feel more inspired praying in our own church when it has the right atmosphere, yet, it is essentially what we do outside the building which has to manifest the fruit [sic] made of God's grace. (Fr Fleabo, From Spring to Life, p. 334).

(Servitan Publications Inc., 8 Alcantara St., La Vallejo, Quezon City, QMD Box 8, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel. 921-3984; Fax 921-3920; E-mail: pdl@ibm.net; Website: http://www.bible-days.org (Christian Publications Inc.) & http://members.tripod.com (Christian Publications Inc.) & http://members.tripod.com (Christian Publications Inc.) & http://members.tripod.com

Aksyon, Reporma, Promdi seal political alliance

From page A1

who his senatorial candidates would be.

But he said he was considering former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, former Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Perfecto Yasay, lawyer Mel Sta. Maria, former Philippine Olympic Committee chair Cristy Reman-Arroyo, former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos and television host Jay Sonza.

Chavez and Mendoza attended the launching, which was held at Club Filipino in Greenhills and attended by around 1,500 supporters. The program actions introduced the two as "future senators."

Ramos-Shahani's father, former President Fidel V. Ramos, is supporting the reelection bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo, chair of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats. The former president is slated soon to campaign for the party.

Reyes added that not recommended senators had also been "nominated" for his slate. He did not identify them.

"We'll be campaigning as a team," he said.

ALYANSA ING PAG-ASA. An alliance of—at least—political parties—Promdi, Reporma and Aksyon Demokratiko—was launched yesterday at the Club Filipino in San Juan. Ronnie de Villa, presidential candidate Raul Roco and Lito Osmeña join hands to seal the agreement. INQUIRER

Convention

Roco had long told reporters that he would name his running mate and senatorial candidates on Nov. 30, during his proclamation convention at the Iloilo Arts Theater.

"Maybe there'll be a change in or (the) choice (for running mate)," he said yesterday.

A search committee has reportedly been put up by Democratikan. It supposedly includes former Health Secretary Ariane Gubat-Ilac, former Bayan Rep. Herminio Aquino and former National Food Authority chief Edwina Zosa of the Estrada administration.

Reportedly, Promdi and Aksyon Democratiko have talked themselves the "alliance of hope." They have also referred to themselves as event using the "Third Force" to be reckoned with in the May elections after the administration and opposition forces.

Earlier, the three parties broke away from the ruling People Power Coalition.

De Villa, a former executive secretary, blasted Ms Macapagal for the split in the PPC. "Since it was disorganized to have (a) Lakas, we view it as a dissolution of the PPC," he said.

Independent voters

Commenting on their problems of campaign machinery and funding, Dimerbo said he, Roco and De Villa were able to win in their respective home provinces in the May 1998 presidential elections without much funds and despite a weak machinery.

Gonzales said he and his colleagues had on their side the "independent voters" vote, he said, comprised the majority of the electorate.

Roco, who won his reelection bid as chair, tried to make light of their situation.

"During our younger days, we were the Bayan people [generation]. When we ran out of leaflets, we'll give out flowers. Flowers still be the symbol of hope," he said.

Dr. Villa resigned as Ms Macapagal's adviser for strategic affairs months ago when he supported Roco's candidacy. He said his resignation was accepted only yesterday.

With a report from Cynthia Padilla

Stop tempting Noli, Malacañang told

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to vice president.

The source, who requested anonymity, said Dr. Cortes had withstood the lack of political experience. Why push him to run for the second highest post in the land?

The activist, a veteran of many street demonstrations and usually a reliable source, also hinted out of the loopholes, the contents of ABS-CBN—the media network that made Dr. Cortes—his pushing his candidacy.

If they are so confident about Dr. Cortes's competence, she said, why not make him the company's chief executive officer?

"Why bind him on our country and people whom they do not even let him run their business empire," she said.

She said the Lopezes were no different from GMA head Sen. Edgardo Angara, who is moving heaven and earth to continue Fernando Poe Jr.'s run for president.

"I advise him to first run for barangay captain," she said.

The small country organizer, leader of a conglomerate of guidelines that actively participant in Edsa I and II, said Poe and other inexperienced candidates should mind the advice of comedy actor Dolphy to stay out of politics because actors are not our cup to be.

"Every time Noli should listen to the wisdom of Dolphy who is content in not running for office, admitting that he has no experience to politics what is to," she said.

Karisa, 106

Meanwhile, President Macapagal-Arroyo's camp has invited another ABS-CBN personality, news anchor Korina Sanchez, to join her senatorial ticket, a Palace official told the Inquirer.

"They like each other, there is mutual respect," the official said of Ms Macapagal and Sanchez's husband, Mike Enriquez.

Sanchez confirmed that statements of the President approached her a few months ago to ask if she wanted to be one of the senatorial candidates of the administration in the 2004 elections.

"But I already declined. Recently not interested running," Sanchez told the Inquirer.

She said she had received testimonies from other parties as well but she was interested in entering politics.

The Palace official said Sanchez has been supportive of the President's projects, including the campaign for generic and low-cost medicines and the public information campaign on the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

The administration is looking for "winnable" female candidates to balance its senatorial ticket, the official said.

Sanchez's friend and "Morning Girls" co-host Kris Aquino reportedly had said in a chance with Sen. Ralf De Leon but said that she was "definitely" going to endorse the opposition candidate, Jr. Lacson, or actor Fernando Poe Jr.

Sanchez was among the 50 or so personalities included in the initial "long list" of senatorial candidates of Lakas-CMD.

But Lakas-CMD sources said yesterday the "short list" included Sanchez, Robert Barbers and Robert Jaworski. Secretaries Jose Isa Lavarez), Richard Gordon (tourism) and Mar Roxas (trade), governor Gwendolyn Garcia and Antonio Abaya and business Ben Benedicto were.

Sources said until Wednesday, even despite Mayor Jose Malapitan, Secretary Mauricio Domogan were "tentative" candidates.

Winnable candidates

The Lakas source insisted said she and her colleagues understand the President's need for winnable candidates.

"The advocacy of the civil society is now politics. Choosing someone not qualified for the post is not anti-politics," the said.

"The right formula would be for her to pick the most competent among winnable candidates," she said, adding that they do understand how the President should be advised regarding the choice of candidates.

She said the said her colleagues were now willing to make campaign vows of politics after undergoing a "humbling experience" during the last senatorial election when they pressed the President to pick highly principled and competent candidates even if they were trailing in the popularity polls.

Don't underestimate FPJ . . .

From page A1

campaign, to join the actor's senatorial lineup. Colmenares said "many groups and personalities" are asking Ting Ting to run for senator. "But she has no decision yet."

Ting Ting received the invitations after she played among the 20 "senatorabbes" in a survey commissioned by the administration about three weeks ago, according to Inquirer.

Poor English

Colmenares lashed out at those who criticized Poe's supposed poor English. "He may not speak good English but is it really important? It's not a requirement for the presidency anyway," he said. "The French, the Japanese and the Chinese don't speak good English but they're proud of their language."

Besides, Poe has excellent management skills as proven by his handling of his film outfit, FPJ Productions, according to Colmenares. "The fact that it has outlived its counterparts—Regal Films, Seiko Films and LVN—speaks a mouthful about Poe as a manager," he said.

But Colmenares maintained he had no concrete plans about supporting Poe's anti-graft action row, noting that Poe has not decided whether he will run.

He said he has not seen Poe personally in a "very long time" though he was able to speak with him on the telephone about two months ago. In the conversation, which he considered "cordial," Colmenares said he asked Poe if he was running. The actor told him that he had not made up his mind yet.

"I also told him I was supportive of his stand that he should not be beholden to any political interest and pronouncement in order to decided to run for president," Colmenares said.

Anyone, Cojuangco said, explained yesterday that Colmenares "prefers" Poe not necessarily "endorses" Poe in next year's presidential election.

"If there was any misinterpretation, I would own up to it," said Ramos, referring to his revelation to the Inquirer on Sunday that Colmenares was keen on supporting Poe in case the veteran actor decided to run for president. Colmenares is a founding member of Co-pil.

Political machinery

Besides Colmenares, the daughter of the late President Ferdinand Marcos is among Poe's early supporters. Imee Marie Ilocos Norte-con said Poe would be the new winner in the 2004 presidential election despite his non-political machinery.

"I doesn't matter who his opponents will be, he they from the ruling party or the opposition. There's simply nobody in the series of opponents who can even approach his winnability factor," she said.

Leftist groups said Poe is the better choice over President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2004. "A Poe presidency holds a much better future than the worst years of President Macapagal," said Teodoro Casiño, secretary general of the Bayan Alyansang Makabayan.

Empire Bolkcon, chair of the Inodependo Political Party which will seek party-list representation in 2004, said "[If] someone else biggest threat to Macapagal-Arroyo told reporters Wednesday in Quezon City.

Poe supporters Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. earlier predicted that if elections were held today, Ms Macapagal would easily beat her opponents.

"As long as are remain fragmented, it will be hard to beat Gloria," Pimentel said.

He said Poe's imminent decision to run for president under the opposition banner could further divide the opposition. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balloon, Norman Bordadora and Michael Lim Ubac*

FILM action king Fernando Poe Jr. greets the media after meeting with his supporters at the FPJ Studios in Manila on Sunday. ARCHIE LIQUIN

Ninoy, Cory Aquino Center for Leadership launched today at Ateneo Rockwell campus

THE NINOY and Cory Aquino Center for Leadership will be launched at 9:30 a.m. today at the Ateneo Professional Schools, Rockwell campus in Makati City.

The event is slated to commemorate the late senator's 72nd birth anniversary on Nov. 27.

The desire to make a significant contribution to the area of leadership development prompted Dr. Rolando and Dr. Josefinda Arlegue of Splash Corp. to establish the center through an endowment fund to the Ateneo de Manila University.

The center was named after the Aquinos upon the expressed wish of the Arlegue couple and with the permission of former President Corazon C. Aquino.

The center aims to develop leaders in all levels of society by developing a theory of effective leadership with focus on the Filipino context and based on scholarly and rigorous research.

DOH admits diverting family planning funds

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT of Health yesterday admitted it had diverted P83 million from the P267 million total appropriation for family planning to buy "OMA-SOP low-cost medicines."

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit made the admission in response to a charge by an accounting of the P267 million fund which the government allocated for family planning in the last three years.

Dayrit explained that since the Macapagal administration's policy was not to buy contraceptives, it used the P83 million appropriated for contraceptives during the time of his predecessor, Alberto Romualdez, as seed money for the OMA-SOP program.

"It's very clear that the policy of this government is not to buy contraceptives ... so instead of contraceptives, we got medicines that are badly, badly needed," Dayrit said in a press briefing yesterday.

The OMA-SOP or Pharmaceutical program is a government project aimed at reducing the cost of basic medicines by as much as 50 percent.

Among the generic drugs included in the OMA-SO program are salbutamol for asthma which is sold to DOH hospitals for P197.60, instead of the P294.75. It goes for its commercial drugstore-branded for Approximately sold at P9.40, instead of P17.75; cotrimoxazole for pneumonia, sold at P5.10 instead of P24.10; and glibenclamide for diabetes, sold for P3.10 instead of P7.75.

Dayrit stressed that the DOH could give a full accounting of the P267 million that some groups claimed had been allocated for family planning.

In a statement, the DOH said that it "has never spent its money for the purchase of contraceptives."

He said that there was really no allocation for family planning in the 2003 budget, saying the supposed family planning funds were under the family health appropriations.

The DOH said it spent P83 million in 2001 on medicines and augmentation to hospitals; P54 million in 2002 on surgical operations like ligation and vasectomy; P97 million this year on family planning operations, and another P68 million this year on a joint family planning program with the Catholic group Couples for Christ.

Stop child detention, DOJ urged

By Philip C. Tubeza

ACTIVISTS for children's rights yesterday asked the Department of Justice to stop the practice of jailing children together with hardened criminals under "subhuman conditions."

The Stop Child Detention Through Executive Action Now (SCEAN) Movement Simeon Santamaria to decry the "growing incidence of police child detention," noting that nearly 5,000 kids were jailed this year.

The group said that it would submit a memorandum calling on the DOJ to put the children detainees in the care of their parents, relatives or the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Child detention violates the children's fundamental human rights as well as international rights," said lawyer Rebecca G. Escoto, a coalition member.

It is a clear violation of the country's laws, particularly the Special Child Protection Act, and international human rights law, he added.

The group cited Bureau of Jail Management and Penology statistics which showed that 4,344 minors—4,105 boys and 441 girls—were jailed during the first quarter of this year all over the country.

It said there 473 children were charged with theft while 384 were indicted for robbery. The group added that 336 minors were arrested for violating the Comprehensive Drugs Act.

Besides the detention of minors with hardened criminals, the group also urged the DOJ to stop other abuses that child detainees are subjected to such as torture, tattooing, sexual abuse of minors by law enforcers or by other detainees, the extortion by policemen of parents of jailed children, the deprivation of children prisoners of their right to access to medical, legal, social, and psychological assistance and services, and their detention in cramped police jails that have no food, water, medicines, clothes, ventilation, sleeping materials and sanitation facilities.

The coalition urged the DOJ to enforce "the state's obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of children in conflict with the law, particularly during the inquest prosecution stage."

It added that this would fulfill "the state duty to observe the best interest of the child principle enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (as well as our own national laws."

Malaysia sending advance team to Mindanao

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia will send seven military officers to Mindanao to serve the Muslim separatist rebellion threat, the defense ministry said yesterday.

Malaysia's Chief of Defense Forces Mohmood Zainal Zainuddin said the team will report on the situation in southern Philippines before the government makes a final decision on whether to deploy around the southern Philippines to study how best to monitor the ceasefire zones formed peace talks begin. "We hope that the teams will visit us shortly after which formal peace talks might resume," he added.

Ojala added that the government is lining up funding and resources that would be used for post-conflict development and rehabilitation in Mindanao.

Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak said last week the deployment of a ceasefire observer team in the area depended on the outcome of talks between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Ojala said that peace talks between the government and the MILF are on a roll.

"There is a frenzy of activity on many fronts, all of which are directed towards the success of our peace talks with the MILF," Ojala said in a statement.

"Representatives from the Philippine government and the MILF have been meeting not only to discuss details of the peace process but also to build trust and confidence. The MILF has subscribed to resumption of formal negotiations and has pledged to help in bringing terrorists in Mindanao, a pledge that we hope they will live up to," he said.

Ojala also noted that on the local front, the ceasefire with the MILF was holding. AFP

Philip C. Tubeza

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Captors reduce ransom

KUALA LUMPUR—Kidnappers who seized six people from a Malaysian jungle resort island on mid-October took them to the southern Philippines are demanding $1 million from the Philippine government for their release, Malaysia's defense ministry chief said Monday.

Chief of Defense Forces Gen. Tan Sri Mohd Zainuddin said the abductors—whom he identified as Abu Sayyaf members—have initially sought $30 million, but reduced the ransom after Philippine troops intensified a search-and-rescue operation.

"Based on Philippine military intelligence, the five hostages are still alive," Zainuddin was quoted as saying by the national news agency, Bernama.

The abductors have increased their demands and are now moving from place to place following heightened military operations."

Zainuddin stated the government received a Bernama report on Oct. 31 and instructed three Filipino and three Indonesians, then fled by speedboat to the Philippine waters.

Philippine soldiers earlier this month recovered one captive, a Filipino, who claimed their captors had killed the other five hostages when included the pastor. The latter had vowed not to be ransomed.

Lt. Col. Jowad Lucero, Philippine armed forces spokesperson, said more troops have been deployed to Tawi-Tawi province. "No count of new information that indicate the hostage victims were still alive, that they were killed." AP

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Guevarra interment

THE REMAINS of Domingo Aquino Guevarra, who died on Nov. 15 at the age of 81, will be interred at the Higienic Memorial Park in Baliuag on Nov. 26 after the funeral rites at the Nagtahan First Baptist Church at noon.

He left his children and grandchildren in the Philippines, Hawaii, Canada and Australia.

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e-mail: ncrfw@ncrfw.gov.ph
website: http://www.ncrfw.gov.ph

Tabang's Ben: Jesuits' loss lumad's gain

From page A6

plex (IP) or Lumad.

As the first Jesuit to live among the Jesuit per-sonnel, as his first mission was for the priest-hood. Anthropologist Dr. Erlinda Burton, a Tboglon, opened his eyes to the world of the lumad.

He fondly recalls the first time he spent three weeks in a Manobo community in Bukidnon. His home bedeviled for him a bed shaped like a canoe—so cold he—which was used congruded like a hammock. Ben loved every minute he spent among the Manobo, although water was scarce and he was given a share of only a liter every day.

"I was amazed at how simply they lived," he remembers. "I experienced a transition. I knew I wanted to devote my life to the IP." He promised to write a paper titled "The Business in Economy of a Divided Mountain."

In 1986, Ben graduated with a degree in Sociology, but was not admitted to the novitiate. He headed for Mindoro Oriental to look up a former classmate working among the Alangan Mangyans in Baruan. There he went to Lake Naujan in Gonbaida and stayed with the Tboli. Soon he was back in Baruan, where more ran a school, as well as livelihood and environmental projects, at the edge of a forest.

There he organized the youth and helped put up Tagbaan (literally, "anrolled"), a training school where the Mangyans would learn not only the three Rs but also how to use tools they could use to improve their lives. Ben's most avid supporter was a veteran in the field, Sister Veronica Pascual.

"Tagbaan is more a major look where the Mangyan's produce are also sorted and developed.

Soul search

Ben was considering getting married and having a family of his own when the contagious vocation called anew. He had worked with the IP for almost a decade, but suddenly he wanted to give more. "To offer my life," he says. "As I thought of that, I shed tears of joy. I felt as if grace was entangling me."

He said goodbye to a neurologist who would have been his wife and left Mindoro. That time he made it to the Jesuit novitiate, where he stayed for four years. He did philosophy studies at the Ateneo and even pronounced his vows, though ordination was still far down the road.

Something stirred inside Ben yet again, prodding him to go back to his first love—the lumad. "I was really unsure for community work," Ben says, certain it was no coincidence that he ended up with the AIDV headed by Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, and with Tabang Mindanao.

Peace sanctuaries

Ben was made in charge of the program for the IP and coordinator of Tabang's Integrated Return and Rehabilitation Program (IRRP). He helped turn 47 communities in Maguindanao, Cotabato and Lanao del Sur into "sanctuaries of peace."

IRRP formulated a peace-building process for war-torn Central Mindanao and its displaced communities.

The process starts at the evacuation area, explains Ben, since the casualties of war have much to share. "We gather data, demographics. We meet with local leaders, datus, barangay leaders, prayer leaders, tribal elders. The goal is to build trust. The evacuees must feel that efforts are sincere."

After the declaration of peace in an area, negotiations between the government and the rebel groups being pursued are next. Ben has played a crucial role in many of these negotiations, after which he would go back to the communities to discuss services, infrastructure, livelihood, shelter and reclamation.

Light for others

Years efforts have borne sweet fruit in the communities of peace. But Ben is not about to rest. "We were to be a light for others, especially the poor and the marginalized," he explains.

The Ilawan ("bubbles of light") center which he founded started as a dream of a circle of friends consisting of lay workers and missionaries. Its vision was to be "a life-giving community endowed with passion for love, service and solidarity with others toward building a society of peace and justice."

It sought to support indigenous peoples' initiatives in building self-reliant communities while promoting their rights to cultural integrity, self-governance, and self-determination, as well as their right to land and capabilities to care for the earth and its resources.

On Sept. 8, 2001, the center was born.

The group members—with Jesuit theologian Father Catalino Arevalo, Sec, and Sr. Mirella Pantastic, SSpS as advisers—aspire "to be lay men and women for others and inspired by the life and the life and mission of Jesus Christ."

"Ben is of that rare species of development workers driven by the Holy Spirit," says Dee. "He is a risk-taker, willing to go where others dare not tread. His vision is rooted in Christian love."

Ben himself says his life "is governed by magis, the love and passion for everything I do." His grandparents' love ended that passion in him, he says. And now the passion comes "from the feeling of gratefulness, of being blessed. You have to share your love."

BEN Abrahano with lumad elders in Mindanao: "I felt grace raining down on me."

Investors foresee big budget deficit

Front page A1

Rafael Buenaventura acknowledged that much of the market's reaction was caused by the swearing-in of Camacho.

"Added to Camacho's resignation is the issue that actor Ejercito Pee is running through with his presidential bid. And that sprouted the market even further," a trader said.

Aside from Camacho, Treasurer Sergio Edeza said on Friday he would leave his post by the end of the year, raising worries that the government's economic team was disintegrating in preparation to maneuver ahead of the May elections.

Buenaventura pointed out that Finance Undersecretary Juanita Amatong, who was appointed officer in charge running Dec. 1, could continue the fiscal programs started by Camacho.

Independent thinker

He said it would be better to appoint an independent thinker in the DOF than to replace Camacho with someone associated with politicians.

"I will continue to consult with congressional leaders and concerned sectors of society, including the Church, on this vexing problem and other problems in the country."

The CBCP episcopal commission on crime pointed out new and the death penalty would only be used for punishing. Opponents of the bill carry the cause of death for the convicted not because they believe it is an appropriate national policy but because it is a popular cause."

The new archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin, described the abolition of law in society, by producing criminals.

"What kind of society do you have when in order to shoot your children or build a little house or get medicines for your sick kids or milk, you have to kidnap somebody? What kind of society do you have where people have to resort in order to gamble in casinos or support their illegitimate children?" Bondoc said in an interview with Catholic-owned Radio Veritas on Sunday night.

Msgr. Melito Mayor Jandoc likewise also said that lifting the moratorium on the death penalty would

AID SIGNED Finance Secretary Isidro Camacho attends the Manila Bay-area meeting with President Macapagal and Executive Secretary Ruben Ancheta in Malacañang on Monday. KJOHN BONNEVIE/MALACAÑANG PHOTO

will be considered," he said.

Banks on Philippine downgrade. Treasury bills jumped nearly 50 basis points at a regular auction yesterday in a sign the government would have to pay more for its borrowings. The Treasury rejected all bids for bills with maturities of a year because it considered the rates too high.

The government's budget has run budget deficits for nine of the past 13 years and has an overall debt mountain of $57.8 billion, spends about 20 percent of its total revenues on servicing its overdues. Past shortfalls set to be to 31 percent in 2003.

The peso was off its earlier lows by early afternoon, trading at 55.60 to the dollar, but analysts said there was a risk it would break to a new record low in the coming days.

The BSP sold about $50 million to the spot market to lift the peso after the local currency fell to P55.178 in the morning. But Buenaventura denied that the BSP sold dollars yesterday. "The market behaved on its results in the sense that the volatility was muted. If there was panic, we would have taken action," he said.

Traders insisted that the central bank accounted for some $20 million of the $111-million turnover.

Despite the peso's recovery, finance officials said it has become more difficult to bring back the peso to the P54-to-the-dollar level of the past.

"We could still end the year at the P54 level but it would be at the high P54 level. Still, I believe the market has calmed down, for now," he said.

Buenaventura earlier projected that the peso would bounce back to P54.50 by the end of the year, especially around Christmas when overseas Filipino workers send large amounts of dollars to their families. The central bank expects dollar remittances to hit $7.5 billion this year, up from $7.1 billion in 2002. With reports from Bienvenido Luis Jr., Jaime Laude and Jeannette Andrade

Now, GMA mulling over death penalty for heinous crimes

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday signaled she would now apply the death penalty for heinous crimes. Or did she?

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye also said the new strategy would be limited to the recent rise in kidnapping that prompted the administration to call for capital punishment. But Malacañang also issued a statement saying the President still had to hold consultations.

"I will continue to consult with congressional leaders and concerned sectors of society, including the Church, on this vexing problem and other problems in the country.

The CBCP episcopal commission on crime pointed out new and the death penalty would only be used for punishing. Opponents of the bill carry the cause of death for the convicted not because they believe it is an appropriate national policy but because it is a popular cause."

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GMA says destabilizers in kidnappings

Front page A1

rodeo threat as the kidnappers aren't armed robberies and [get] evaded," Dr. Leon told reporters. "The evidence they displayed it quite reasoned. They're saying they have links to politicians."

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye also said the new strategy would be limited to the recent rise in kidnapping that prompted the administration to call for capital punishment.

He said the President was not referring to any specific political group in her statement but said "the possibility is there that this is a plot to overthrow the administration emerge."

In her statement, Ms Macapagal said the government's response should not be clouded. "We have a comprehensive plan of action tackling all fronts and it is unfortunate that we have a spate of kidnap-for-ransom while we are taking it to gains in the anti-drug campaign," she said, as she reiterated that her administration would bring those behind the kidnap-slaying of young Cocoa-Cola executive Inez Glorioso to justice.

Ms Macapagal said her administration was "doing the best it can and will not waver" in its anti-crime efforts.

All-purpose excuse?

When asked about criticism that Malacañang was blaming everything on destabilizers as an all-purpose excuse, Bunye said: "We've just raising the possibility that other than the normal profit motive, considering the modus operandi employed and the frequency of the incidents, there might be more to it than just the profit motive."

In Congress, Rep. Ilocos Sur Rufino Bueno called on the Macapagal administration not to use the May 2004 elections as an excuse for the spike in kidnap-for-ransom activities.

Bueno, a member of the opposition LDP party said government authorities should not deny the people's attention to politicians they suspect of kidnapping to raise funds for the elections.

"It should not matter whether the kidnap-for-ransom activities were committed by politicians or ordinary criminal syndicates. What should matter now that these kidnappings were happening in a rate that is very alarming. Their job it to provide the incidence of kidnapping and to track down and prosecute them to unfound," he said.

He said some former military personnel had been involved in kidnappings in the past, but admitted that the military establishment had no similar information on active officers and men.

"I'm not going to say that there are active members of the Armed Forces who are engaged in kidnapping as activities as of now," Garcia said at a press briefing.

He maintained that the military would assist the National Police Kidnapping Task Force (Kidnap) and the police in the fresh campaign to run-out kidnapping in terms of intelligence-gathering and operations.

"The AFP will be supporting the PNP to run the kidnappers as commanded just in recent relation operations," he said.

Garcia noted that anti-kidnapping special units of the revived National Capital Region Command and the Task Force Libra will be organized to provide support to the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response, Makati's operating unit.

"If there is a need for transfer in the conduct of the operations of Makati, then the specialized units belonging to the Task Force Libra and the National Capital Region Command will be utilized," he said.

Joint statement

In a joint statement on Sunday, 28 Chinese-Filipino associations condemned Ms abduction and asked the government to reimpose the death penalty for kidnappers.

"The curse of kidnapping for ransom is getting bolder. Once again, it strikes fear and dread in our communities," the statement said.

The rash of violent kidnappings led Lee Police official, who asked to be unnamed, to say that the frequency and location of the kidnappings were "too much of a coincidence."

"They are dumping the bodies on the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard," the official noted, saying this was meant to project a negative image of the President.

Last week, a member of the Perez team said that neither they were convinced that the recent spate of kidnappings were anything but simple crimes.

They said they intended to show the Chinese-Filipino community that President Macapagal-Arroyo and her anti-kidnapping point man, former Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, were helpless against kidnap gangs, the Perez camp told the Inquirer. With reports from Dirlenion E. Esguerra, TJ Burgonio, Cynthia Balana/ AP

People power in Georgia topples Shevardnadze

Front page A8

whether police and soldiers would have obeyed orders to use force.

Outside parliament, the mere of Shevardnadze's enemy turned the protest into a party. Grenade packed the streets of the capital, pouring champagne, honking car horns and celebrating into the night.

"It's a great day in the history of Georgia," said cardiologist Dr. George Chokheli, 21, waving the white flag with red stripes and crosses that is the symbol of what was, until Sunday afternoon, the opposition.

Parliament Speaker Nino Burdzhanadze, the interior opposition leader, assumed the presidency temporarily and pledged to hold elections in 45 days as required by the constitution.

Swift denouement

Burdzhanadze, a schoolchildhood 39-year-old lawyer, said law enforcement agencies is to establish order and urged. Georgians to resume work and normal life.

The swift denouement came after opposition-led protests on Saturday as the opposition tried to convene the legislature that Shevardnadze said was elected in the vote. The president was hustled out a back door by leather-jacketed bodyguards in a nationally televised scene that began the tense endgame.

On Monday, Saakashvili to oust a resignation ultimatum and said Shevardnadze's overdue would be unconsul if he didn't comply. Appointments converged on the residence, Saakashvili and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov arrived separately. Within about an hour, Shevardnadze's resignation was announced.

Many Georgians have long detested Shevardnadze for letting corruption infest the country while most of his people fell into poverty, scraping by on tiny salaries and pensions amid chronic power outages and water shortages.

It was the parliamentary elections that galvanized the opposition and started the swell of protests.

Complaints of widespread ballot-box stuffing and other abuses quickly emerged, and opposition forces led by the fiery and resolute Saakashvili began daily protests outside parliament that aroused thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, demanding the election be annulled or that Shevardnadze resign.

Shevardnadze called for "dialogue" but insisted he would stay in office through the end of his term in 2005. He refused to void the vote.

But his grip loosened and his opinion shrank over the weekend as the opposition chased him out of parliament and some military units defected to the protesters.

When election czar Shevardnadze's resignation faded, Georgia's new president and members of parliament will face a stern challenge in maintaining unity and dealing with the Caucasus nation's persistent problems.

Of strategic interest

Georgia, which sits astride a planned oil pipeline between the Caspian Sea and Western economies, is wedged between Turkey and Russia. It is of vital strategic interest to both Washington and Moscow, which has shown no desire to involve itself in trading blame in Tbilisi and has refrained at US military involvement in the nation.

The United States recognized Burdzhanadze as interim president, offering support for Georgia's new leaders while urging them to seek stability, abide by the constitution and hold democratic elections.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell called Burdzhanadze "to offer our support and to encourage her and her colleagues to proceed in a manner consistent with Georgia's constitution."

The European Union said Shevardnadze's resignation "opens the way for the restoration of constitutional law and order" and stressed that democratic elections must be held to help "restore a climate of trust and confidence" in Georgia.

Richard Boucher, spokesperson of the US Department of State, said Sunday that Shevardnadze "made his decision in the best interests of the people." He praised the former Soviet foreign minister—who helped reunite Germany and wind down the Cold War under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev—as "a towering figure in Georgian history and a close friend of the United States."

Burdzhanadze said Monday that Georgia would seek to improve ties with Russia while firmly maintaining its efforts to join them and integrate with Europe. AP

Pimentel: GMA may meet same fate

ZAMBOANGA (sun. Agalon/9) warned it yesterday warned President Macapagal-Arroyo would meet the same fate as ousted President Joseph Estrada if Shevardnadze should desire be massive threat ing in the streets of mail local elections in May 2003 PLUS.

"What happened to Georgia should be a fair warning to the administration not to tamper with the will of the people in the 2003 elections," Pimentel said.

He pointed out that the peaceful "people power" revolution that ousted Shevardnadze was sparked by widespread corruption in government and massive fraud during Georgia's parliamentary elections on June 2.

Pimentel said the Georgian uprising was, in many aspects, patterned after the Edsa I "people power" revolution that removed then President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Michael Lim Ubac

The WORLD

Edited by Lorenzo B. Gozo

Shevardnadze toppled by proteges who turned against him

TBILISI—The young opposition leaders who toppled Eduard Shevardnadze from Georgia's presidency this weekend were people he befriended, nurtured and launched on their political careers before they turned against him.

Like Shakespeare's king Lear, Shevardnadze, 75, was ruined by those he loved the most.

Immediately before his ouster opposition leaders who had been opposing ruling protests thrilled themselves on his official residence just outside the capital to demand that he step down. At that meeting were three politicians whom Shevardnadze had done more than anyone to create.

The most ornate of the trio was Saakashvili, 36, who rushed by with swarming bad, until two years ago he was Shevardnadze's diarem political associate and the man most in her argument to the president.

He was a leading light in the Citizens' Union of Georgia, the governing bloc. As speaker of parliament until he quit at the end of 2001, he was widely regarded as Georgia's second most influential politician. Now he is its opponent, as part leader of the Rustaveli Bloc.

Sitting alongside him in the president's Byzantine residence Sunday was Nino Burjanadze, the elegant 36-year-old member of music with jet black hair who replaced Shevardnadze as speaker of parliament.

Her ties to Shevardnadze are even closer, her father was up through the Georgian Communist Party ranks with Shevardnadze and was for many years head of the state bread monopoly. The two families were close.

Under Shevardnadze's tutelage, Burjanadze restored politics, also to the pro-government bloc. At the same time, her husband was appointed first deputy prosecutor general.

She quit as speaker six months ago, and with Desanta set up her own opposition party. She has taken over from Shevardnadze as nominative head of state.

The third figure facing Shevardnadze across the negotiating table was another former protege, Mikheil Saakashvili.

He became a rising star in the Citizens' Union. He was elected to parliament and in 2000, Shevardnadze appointed him as his justice minister. But relations after he resigned and set up the National Movement opposition party. AFP

13 FOREIGN STUDENTS DEAD IN MOSCOW FIRE
Firefighters are dispatched to fire at high-rise dormitory of Moscow's Peoples' Friendship University early Mon. 24 in this TV image. The fire killed at least 33 people and injured 139 others.

3 US troopers killed, bodies mutilated in Iraq

MOSUL, Iraq—Three US soldiers were killed in northern Iraq on Sunday, including two whose witnesses said had their throats cut, as the US military announced it had closed Baghdad airport to civilian traffic after a missile hit on a US cargo jet.

Two shopkeepers who saw the deaths of the two soldiers in the main northern city said they had their throats slit after being ambushed in traffic.

Questioned by journalists on a briefing, a senior US military spokesperson said it would be "plausible" to comment on the circumstances, but did not specifically deny it.

A formal statement said the two men died from the 101st Airborne Division, which patrols Mosul, were killed just past noon in western part of the city center.

"Two soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault were killed just past noon today in near Mosul (the main part of the city)," said the statement.

They were "shot while on routine patrol one component to another in the city." It said without saying they had been shot dead. AFP

5 US soldiers die in Afghan chopper crash

WASHINGTON—A US combat helicopter carrying troops on a nighttime mission crashed outside an American military base near the Afghan capital, killed Sunday, killing at least five soldiers and injuring seven others in another setback for the US military.

Coming on the heels of a spate of deadly helicopter crashes in Iraq, the incident is certain to raise new questions about US military engagements overseas at a time when President George W. Bush is beginning to campaign for reelection on the merits of his war record.

Although an formal announcement has been made, the downed helicopter is presumably a highly classified MH-53 Pave Low, one of the largest and most technologically advanced choppers in the US armed forces, primarily in special operations.

"It was a MH-53 transport helicopter. The personnel on board were Army and Air Force," Maj. Mike Shoults, a spokesperson for the US Central Command, said.

The only other US helicopter of the MH-53 series, the Sea Dragon, belongs to the Navy and is exact to intervening operations.

In a three-paragraph statement, Central Command said the cause of the crash remained unknown and was under military investigation.

"The service members were supporting Operation Mountain Resolve, "the statement said without providing any further details.

But Pentagon officials the helicopter crashed as it was heading from the mountains from Bagram Air Base at about midnight and was destroyed on impact.

Operation Mountain Resolve was launched earlier this month in an effort to flush out Taliban supporters and other Islamic militants in northeastern Pakistan and Kunar provinces.

One of its key goals is to deny sanctuary to remnants of the ousted Taliban regime and to stop them from participating in attacks on US and coalition forces. AFP

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Championing the Cause of Civil Sector Participation in Development
Mr. Marissa Concepcion Reyes, Association of Foundations President

DAY TWO: December 2 - Tuesday
Day One Synthesis and Preliminary Workshop
Advocacy Advertising that Creates Value for Development Management
Dr. Leonardo Garcia, Philippine Marketing Association President
Empowering the Youth: The Affected Sector... the Future Generation?
Mr. Paulo Benigno A. Aquino IV Chair, National Youth Commission
Uplifting the Hearts and Minds of the Filipinos Through Volunteerism
Ms. Dr. B. De Guzman, Caring Filipino Movement President
Winning Ways to Attract Foreign Direct Investments for Sustainable Development
Mr. Jeremy Cliff, Shell Philippines Exploration Managing Director
Corporate Foundations: Being Good and Being Well for the Common Welfare
Mr. Antonio M. Sobrepeña, Metrobank Foundation Executive Director

DAY THREE: December 3 - Wednesday
Day Two Synthesis and Preliminary Servant Leadership Workshop
Principle-Centered Leadership Strategies Towards Good Governance
Secretary Jose D. Lina, Jr., Department of Interior and Local Government
Exploring the Heart of Servant Leadership
Dr. Federico M. Macaranas, Dean, ADB Center for Development Management
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Editor Cesar D. Hidalgo

BY USING proper geotechnology (Eco-Mat), this slope and shoreline below are protected from soil erosion.

Managing soil erosion vital to groundwork stability

By Charles S. Bolano

DURING YOUR travel you must have encountered portions of a highway that have collapsed because the soil underneath has been washed away. Similar result may also happen in pieces of property located in slopes or near bodies of water.

Soil erosion occurs whenever water or wind moves land with enough force to move soil. It is a natural phenomenon as it has occurred over the millennia as part of geological processes and climate change.

The impact of soil erosion, however, has become much worse in recent years due especially to human activities in deforestation and poor land use practices.

According to the United Nations Population Fund

HK votes for democracy, whips pro-Beijing party

HONG KONG—Hong Kong voters leaned on the main pro-Beijing party in local elections, giving a sharp rebuke to an unpopular government and a major boost to the pro-democracy camp, results showed Monday.

The district council election on Sunday was the first opportunity to measure popular support for democracy since massive public protests rocked Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa's government in July.

However low analysts predicted the vote inflicted on the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), which supported a controversial security bill demanded by Beijing which triggered the protests.

Democratic Party chair Yeung Sum said the results and the record turnout of nearly 45 percent were "a clear message to Tung Chee-hwa and the Chinese government that the public wants full democracy."

The Democratic Party claimed 93 seats—compared to 86 seats in 1999—while the DAB won just 64 seats compared to 83 in the last elections. A total of 600 seats were elected, but only 326 were contested.

Pro-democracy groups have stepped up pressure on Tung to start consultations for constitutional reforms towards the goal of full democracy which is enshrined under the Basic Law—the territory's mini constitution since the former British colony reverted to Chinese rule in 1997.

However, the Basic Law does not lay out a timetable for achieving full democracy. Tung, who is currently hand-picked by an 800-member committee, oversees a partially elected legislature.

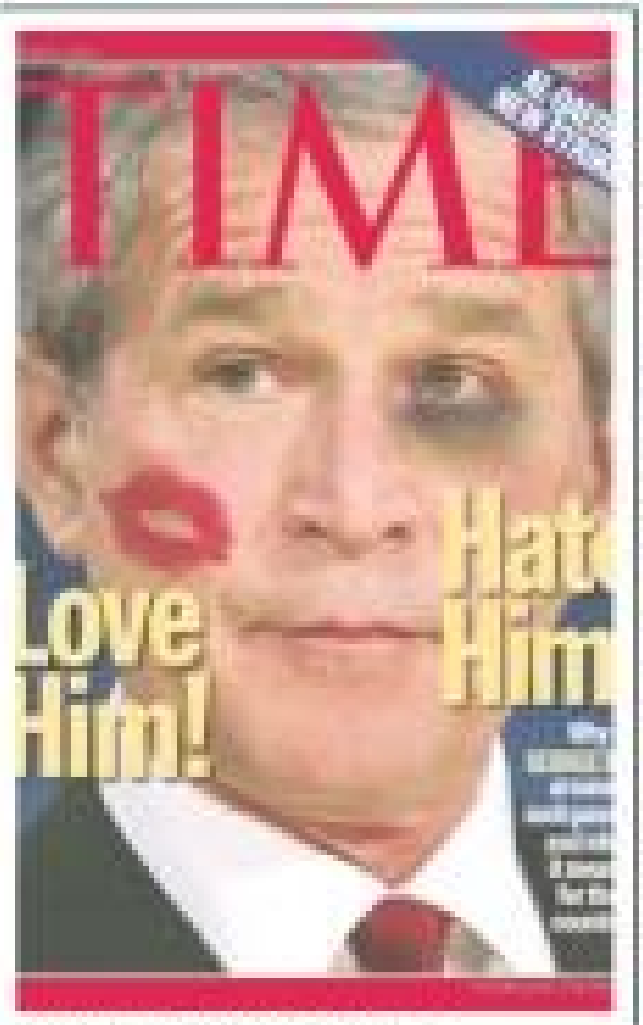
Any proposal secretly bill would erode fundamental rights and freedom, guaranteed for 50 years under the Basic Law, led 500,000 people to march against the bill on July 1 and cause the withdrawal.

Yeung said the success in the elections for the councils, which are an advisory bodies and have limited powers, indicated interest for September elections for the more powerful Legislative Council would be higher.

Defeated DAB chair Tsang Yok-sing offered to resign, saying his party had suffered from forming close ties with the government. The party is to meet next week to discuss the results and Tsang's future.

"A serious defeat reflects shortcomings and so it is only right for me to step down," said Tsang.

Tsang said he had also informed Tung of his decision to resign from the Executive Council—Tung's cabinet. AFP



EVENLY SPLIT FOR AND AGAINST

TIME's cover art portrays a photo illustration of US President George W Bush with a lipstick-kiss on his left cheek, and a bruised right eye for its Dec. 1 edition. A new TIME CNN Poll shows that Americans almost equally divided: 47 percent are likely to vote for Bush and 48 percent are not. His job approval rating of 52 percent is down from its peak of 89 percent in October 2001, and his disapproval has reached a new high of 43 percent.

Report: Jackson offered to send boy away

WASHINGTON—The boy accusing pop superstar Michael Jackson of molesting him is a cancer survivor whose family rejected an offer by the singer to move them to Latin America to escape more media attention, Newsweek magazine reported Monday.

The weekly citing sources, said the boy met Jackson through a comedy club owner who was working to boost his self-esteem.

Jackson, 45, was charged with multiple counts of child molestation after the boy accused the pop singer of forcing him to have sex.

In a story set to appear on newsstands Monday, Newsweek said Jackson's friendship with the boy was first revealed in February in a British documentary in which the two appeared holding hands and talking about how the boy and his younger brother had slept at Jackson's [ranch].

Both Jackson and the boy insisted there was nothing sexual about their visits, and in the media firestorm that followed the broadcast, the boy's mother came forward to defend the singer.

A family friend however told Newsweek the boy's mother began pulling her family away from Jackson when his people later offered to relocate the family to Latin America to avoid the media glare.

"They were trying to shut them up," the friend told the weekly. AFP

Pakistan declares Kashmir truce

ISLAMABAD—Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali Sunday announced a unilateral ceasefire by Pakistan along the Line of Control that divides disputed Kashmir and asked India to give a positive response in the interest of peace between the two nuclear rivals.

"Our armed forces deployed on the Line of Control (LoC) have been ordered to observe a complete ceasefire with effect from this day" the Muslim festival marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan Wednesday or Thursday, he said in a nationally televised address.

"We expect India would give a positive response because without this our action will remain incomplete."

The LoC is the de facto border dividing the Indian and Pakistani zones of Kashmir.

India had earlier rejected Pervez Musharraf's offer of a reciprocal ceasefire in Kashmir.

The ceasefire announcement was the first major move coming directly from the civilian prime minister who critics say does not exercise full power while the president is widely thought to be calling the shots.

Official sources said the announcement followed close consultations between Jamali and General Musharraf over the past 10 days during which they held a series of meetings at national and provincial levels.

"The ceasefire came from a consensus reached between the two leaders on dealings with India ahead of the forthcoming South Asian summit in Islamabad," said political analyst Hilal Hussain. AFP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

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Alternative scenarios

IN A RECENT lecture at the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Prof. Felipe Miranda, one of the country's well-known pollsters and political analysts, presented four scenarios for election year 2004:

First (most preferable but least likely scenario): A new age dawns for Filipinos. Politics is given second priority, politicians, civil society, the private sector and the citizenry make a concerted effort to address the country's numerous crises; public accountability is exacted of erring government officials.

EDITORIAL

Elections are held and their honesty, orderliness, peacefulness and overall credibility provide winners with the requisite legitimacy; public confidence in society's institutions and governance in particular starts building up...

(The descriptions are truncated for lack of space.)

Second (further preferable scenario): Much else is historical precedent, but less developments account. Election fever distracts the nation from attending to economic and political underliners; polarizing rhetoric may emerge as decisive governance; critical sectors, in particular business, adopt a wait-and-see holding strategy and do not realize the necessary investments to energize the economy.

National elections schedule problematic in certain instances gain professional knowledge; new winners with sufficient legitimacy; the new administrations starts serious governance initiatives to enhance power in the economy, curb criminality and improve the general environment for competitive economic activity...

Third (most likely, survivalist scenario): Ideas of what historically has been the case continues with no new, progressive developments taking place. Election fever at its highest pitch; politicking dominates; electoral campaigns deplete any responsible version of public finance management by the authorities.

Seriously flawed elections take place and no real legitimation of the "elected" officials results; a new administration is installed and after the customary "honeymoon" period with the public, starts disintegrating as a political entity...

Fourth (not altogether unlikely, but fervent scenarios): "No-fit" and military intervention; breakdown of civilian governance. The elections are aborted; the public clamors for restoration of elections; a hold-over administration tries to govern and meets open, possibly armed, public or major sectoral opposition; the military and the police are activated to restore public order; the military assumes political controller functions and martial law prevails over the republic.

The first scenario seems almost impossible to bring about in the confused and confusing Philippine political milieu. The fourth scenario is too horrible even to contemplate. We cannot afford a repeat of martial law.

We are left with the second and third scenarios, and if history and experience are to be our guides, we will probably see a reenactment of the third. But we can, if all the members of the body politic will put their hearts and minds to it, achieve the second scenario.

Here is our wish list of what we hope will help bring about the second scenario:

• We wish that the deadline for the filing of candidacies for both national and local offices would be restored to Dec. 15 from Jan. 2. A Jan. 2 deadline only prolongs the period of uncertainty, with adverse effects on the political and economic situations.

• We wish that the number of the major presidential candidates would be narrowed to only three so that one candidate can claim a clear majority, or a strong plurality in the coming elections. We do not want a repeat of the 1992 elections when Fidel V. Ramos obtained a thin 23.58 percent plurality. We would want a decisive vote to avoid the occurrence of political instability.

• We wish that the presidential candidates would avoid, or, at the very least, limit personal attacks to avoid heating up the political atmosphere.

• We wish that the Commission on Elections would do its best to ensure clean, honest and orderly elections.

• We wish that a gun ban would be enforced as early as one week before the election to minimize cases of campaign and election violence.

• We wish that the Executive would impress upon the military and the police that their duty is to safeguard the security of the ballot and not to intervene in favor of any party or candidate.

The nation is at a crucial stage in its history. Many political characters and disruptions have taken place in the past two and a half years. We cannot afford to have seriously flawed elections taking place next year. They would be the last nail in the coffin of a suffering, seriously troubled country.

Nine US presidents didn't finish college

THE MAIN issue the rioters have against President-elect Joseph Estrada is not a presidential candidate's failure to reach a high school dropout. So what? The Constitution does not require the President to be a college graduate, or even a high school or undergraduate graduate. Nine American presidents never went to college, including such great presidents as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln. (Although Lincoln was accepted to the bar and practiced law, he was largely self-taught) and even the 20th century presidents who are not the ivy-league type as Harry S. Truman. The others are Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore and Andrew Goodard. In fact, the 17th president of the United States, Andrew Johnson, never went to school at all. His wife taught him how to read and write.

Another man against PEJ is that he is a movie actor again, so what? Ronald Reagan, the 40th president, was also a movie actor, a not so good one as Erap. (He also was actually an oldtimer in that dueling hero David Flynn.) But Reagan teamed can to be one of the better American presidents.

If not Reagan who turned around the ailing American economy (and made "Reaganomics" an economic byword), the main thing that is ailing the Philippine economy. He limped a bipartisan coalition in Congress and won't go to the embarrassment of an economic program which included the largest budget and tax cuts in US history, and a social security reform bill designed to ensure the long-term solvency of the system. (Are not budget deficits, high taxes, and bankruptcy of the social security system the main issues that the United States was experiencing the ninth consecutive year of economic prosperity, low unemployment, low energy costs and a low inflation rate. A movie actor whom they imagined or claim he entertained for ten years might be president did all that.

High unemployment, high energy costs and high inflation have been plaguing us for years. A succession of college graduates, lawyers, generals and economists have been unable to solve them. Maybe a movie actor like Reagan is what we need.

Former Philippine[illegible] was belittled as a mere "former intellectual" when he ran for president, and Corazon Aquino belittled as a "mere housewife." But these two remain as the most beloved and respected of our presidents. Magsaysay a "mere mechanic," broke the back of a festering rebellion, but a succession of college graduates, including a general, couldn't win the war against the present insurgency and, in fact, worsened the rebellion and the conflict. Cory Aquino, a "mere housewife," gave us back our freedom but the college graduates who succeeded her are slowly taking it away from us again.

On the other hand, the most hated presidents who plunged the country into its darkest hours (it was a lawyer with a brilliant academic record) Ferdinand Marcos, brought Martial Law, country to monstrous proportions and prompted Congress to enact a law against plunder.

But look at Erap, the clown act, also a popular movie actor, the 13th president to be impeached, and the first to face charges of plunder.

Let us look at the facts. Erap is not accused of stealing a single peso from the government. He was impeached and is facing plunder charges for allegedly accepting money from gambling lords and for hiding that money in a secret bank account under a Dollitized name, Jose Velarde. What he did, if true, is a crime and makes him unworthy of being president.

But isn't stealing from the people a worse crime? Being so clever and devious as to escape detection does not make the crime any less.

Continuing to do it while the people suffer makes it worse. Doing it because many of his fellow officials are also doing it makes the criminal feel less sinful, but it makes the crime much worse. Then there is a conspiracy to cover the people. It is an insult to put a country that needing the people's money but a whole gang.

It's no different from kidnapping syndicates using employees or squatting syndicates, except that their members wear expensive suits, ride in luxury limousines, live in big houses and are educated in the best schools. But they also have secret bank accounts under Dollitized names.

Erap's greatest sin in being a movie actor looked down upon by the elitists, by the college graduates in social society. It is no difference from the peasants being looked down upon by the aristocrats and so-called upper class. And that is also the sin they are pinning on PEJ: he is only a movie actor not worthy to be president of the nation. He is not a member of the elite.

But a good president does not have to be a member of the elite. He does not have to be a college graduate (where are millions of college graduates who are helpless or even a high school graduate. Be only has to have common sense and sincerity and willingness to serve the people. He need not be hooked people who succeed in business, who are those who try to succeed in politics or civil service. He need not be a product of a movie production, could turn out of the most prosperous in the industry. Maybe he can do the same thing with our government. God knows so many others with impeccable academic credentials failed. We have had so many "intellectuals" as media but people who have failed and who are tired of them. It's time we tried somebody else.

• • •

TODAY'S JOKE: I went to a fortune teller in Quiapo and asked who would be the next Philippine president. She looked at her crystal ball and said the next President's name would begin with a "E"

So will it be either Estrella or Heg (Lawrence, Monday; DWIZ, Patrick; EGMA, Nazario (Cojuangco), or Felicidad Enrile (Reyes)?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Back to square one

There's the Rub

Comrades & Quirinos

ON FRIDAY(in Jaime Cardinal Sin, he did not say "politics is MP acting-in," as on headline in the Second Front Page said last Saturday. He said, "Politics without Christ is the greatest scourge." And further he said, "Among all areas of Filipino life, it is politics that needs most the saving presence of Christ."

There is a difference. I know that because other people have said that politics is "too much politics," to the horror of the author, Gibbons, not to mention princes of the Church, including (by his himself). The new archbishop of Manila, Gaudencio Rosales, said something to that effect only last week. I know that too because someone asked me that question in La Salle, where I spoke last Friday (during truth, Robert Sanchez, Eleanor Jose and Wendy Agrisano can tell me, positive. Someone read a newspaper in Rosales that said he wants politics to stop hindering our country, and added what I thought of it.

I applied that my problem with people who say that, and instead of that to politics, is that they imagine that I am not themselves properly for it. They imagine that we are themselves to blame for what they are complaining about. When they say we should stop politicking, they really mean what people should stop politicking, not them.

The late Cebu archbishop recently retired but that was the delivered his State of the Nation Address. She called on everyone to stop hindering, think of the nation before self and put his shoulder to the wheel. There was only one problem. She herself started thinking of nation before self, she wasn't making any personal sacrifice, she wasn't putting her shoulder to the wheel. What she was doing was campaigning all over the place.

That was what was causing the hindering to begin with. Everybody knew she would run. She was then ambassador to her country, showing only a desire to be governor in the big house in the Pasig where she was given four years free board and lodging by Imee R. When she started by declaring a truce on politics was that everybody else should stop campaigning, except her.

Then like those currently fall on dead ears.

"Too much politics" is also the motive behind any officers' complaint. They've named the politician into Public Enemy No. 1, depriving him as the prime source of corruption and immorality in the country. They forget when they are talking of martial law, in 1972, they had been elected (the last in the late 1960s), when they mounted one coup after another against Cory and what they did recently which was to launch a mutiny against GMA, and threaten some more. What is a military mutiny or a coup, but politics in its most primitive form, which is the wielding of the club?

"Too much politics" is the business common sense's complaint. That's what the Philippine Chamber of Commerce said on two occasions over the last couple of months. The first was the time the Joint Senate inquest said they would not be the big Congress' effort to unpack Hubert Davide. Quite apart from that, it has been saying it, like a mantra, throughout the years. That permeates the business community itself is not pleasing politics.

But if you read Alfred Mahew's excellent collection of essays on the book The Anatomy of Power, you'll know that the politics of this country is an extension of its economics which is an extension of its family. Or put more succinctly the politics of this country is determined by a few families who invest in candidates (if their investment is wrong, they can always switch to another) to protect their economic interests. The business community was among the first to embrace Marcos' martial law because it is easier to do business in a country where someone flamps in even the most

Continuing to do it while the people suffer makes it worse. Doing it because many of his fellow officials are also doing it makes the criminal feel less sinful, but it makes the crime much worse. Then there is a conspiracy to cover the people. It is an insult to put a country that needing the people's money but a whole gang.

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Back to square one

NPC likely to back different presidential candidates

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

WITH SAUDIJAZIZ People's Coalition founder Eduardo M. Cojuangco out of the running in the presidential race, the question is whether the NPC Interim can stay quiescent until its members on Dec. 15 cast their votes for the party's choice. But the likelihood is that the NPC will end up giving individual members the freedom to support the presidential candidate of his preference. Thus, there will be NPC members such as Eleazar Rep. Rozzy Medina who will campaign for Senator Panfilo Lacson; Bulacan Rep. Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado and top gang for Raul Roco or Sen. Panfilo Lacson. But from indications, most NPC members will go for President Macapagal-Arroyo. Some reporters detect a measure of cooperation between the current reconciliation bench in Malacañang already pledged their support to GMA. Among them were Representatives Marcelino Libanan of Eastern Samar, Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur, Cirilo Roque of Lanao del Norte, Francisco Ignacio and Mark Cojuangco, son of official Dominador Comado Estrella of Negrosanon.

* * *

I asked Senator Presidente Franklin Drilon why he has decided to be sworn into the Liberal Party on Friday, which also coincides with his 58th birthday. Drilon quit the LDP in late 2000 over the Estrada impeachment, and in 2001 he ran as an independent under the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino. Now he is back in LP and has been without a party. He said he feels "comfortable" with LP leaders, such as party president Florencio Abad, Mayor Lito Atienza of Manila and Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III. Drilon said he was also invited by Senator Roco to join his party, which he is acknowledged as the dominant leader, but here is longtime LP stronghold, with such leaders as Reds Jose, Neil Tupas, Jusly Antonio-Nonoy and Antiquio Oreo. Asked whether he will run in Cebu, he laughed a reluctant nonoy para Lakas." The Senate chief is quite a catch for the LP even though there will also be two LDs in the Senate (with Sen. Francis Pangilinan).

* * *

Speaking of Senator Aquino, his uncle, Makati Rep. Agapito Aquino, was quoted as saying he would try to convince him to go for presidential candidate Lacson so that the entire Aquino clan would be united in its preference. The latest rumored to be thinking about campaigning for Lacson is actress Rio Aquino. But I think Rio will have to wait forever, because Lacson's not Noynoy ever going for Lacson, given his past record. I have had countless of conversations with Noynoy on this matter, and he has been quite clear, both of, e.g., voting for the impeachment of Comelec Commissioner Luciendida Tancangco and against that of Chief Justice Hilario Davide. If Sr., we were pressed today he would be very proud of his son, but perhaps terribly ashamed of his politician siblings.

* * *

Last Friday's said on a shabu factory in Antipolo which yielded what is considered to be the biggest drug haul of more than 1,000 kilos of shabu worth at least P2.1 billion was nothing less than congratulations. The said on the "very sophisticated" shabu factory was described by a very pleased President Macapagal-Arroyo as "very big bust." One El Nino enforcement Agency official said the huge haul was coming thing he had never seen before. Think of how many needy lives would have been wrecked by that huge haul.

The Antipolo raid was only the latest in a long string of spectacular successes of the government's Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Task Force (AID SOTF), headed by PNP Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay. Almost two weeks ago, AID SOTF, together with the Bureau of Immigration, raided and dismantled another clandestine drug warehouse in Valenzuela, Bulacan, operated by Chinese nationals and seized about P1 billion worth of shabu.

It will be recalled that last July, a huge haul in Cavite was already hailed as the biggest then. Only laypeg komparan ito? It seems that despite the massive efforts of several agencies, it will take a while before the drug menace is contained. The good thing is that Aglipay and his men are doing everything they can, not just to dismantle factories but also to prosecute, eying politicians who are in cahoots with the drug people.

* * *

In a recent chat with Aglipay he told me that 246 administrative cases and an equal number of criminal cases have been filed against erring lawmen, accomplices with China and solving the murder of 108 elected barangays and has actually been able to close 2,616 barangays, and accounted for 1,956 drug personalities with 2,607 cases filed before the courts. But Aglipay said one problem is the lack of judges and prosecutors to handle drug-related cases. With the courts clogged by cases, government operatives are tied down with court appearances, preventing them from participating in police operations. Perhaps Chief Justice Davide and Court Administrator Presbitero Velasco Jr. could help in this regard. I hope that the recent increase in salaries of judges and prosecutors will make serving in the bench more attractive to good lawyers.

* * *

Aglipay stressed that the successful crackdown on shabu factories came after nearly a year of intensive monitoring of surveillance in each case. In fighting crime, be it kidnapping or drug trafficking, so much really depends on intelligence work, which cannot be finished overnight. Moreover, fighting the drug menace needs the cooperation of all law-abiding citizens who are not beginning with the home and the school.

A state of fear

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS I guarded up north at the perfidy of that dread Undersecretary, Chanto baked to take down the taxi cab's name and license plate numbers.)

But what seems even more shocking than the case of Chanto's ordeal is that it wasn't even the first time I'd heard of such an incident. A friend of mine, with three college-age children, has an entire repertoire of tales about her children's close brushes with danger from being kidnapped. Her daughter was being assisted in the wash by cell phone customers, to being abducted outside a bank with a female classmate then being forced to board a waiting car, without "her boyfriend." Her seventeen-year-old commented only in their money, letting them drawn a bit blurbs away.

* * *

I DIE these stories to bolster my side in arguments with my own daughter, who as a senior in high school is getting ready to graduate and "cando" regimen she's in. Her bars usually end, nothing too bad I will bet, dredging out yet another item from my growing collection, culled from the experiences of my friends and relatives.

But I know I am only postponing the inevitable. My daughter will have to submit or later learn to navigate her way through the dangerous streets of Manila, whether in itself or by driving. I can only hope that by the time she's embarking, the city's streets will be safe and secure. Dream on... I know.

* * *

THE DIFFERENCES of my sister and her friends—who are only in their second year of college, mind—was one that their fears associated

Big task for Manila's new archbishop

All I can do this new Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales is being installed at the Manila Cathedral. I should have been there in written this historic event, but for some personal opinion about how the proceedings would be done (some old local hierarchical and ritual celebrations). I opted to spend Archbishop "Gaudy" with my own perspective of the local Church in the Capital diocese.

Yes, he is indeed a shepherd in in one sense, and I presume fully aware that when he greeted Regalo Pepe Philippines an exclusive interview at his Good wednesday last Nov. 16, two days after he had his first meeting with the local press. In that engaging meet, I saw his inner soul coming in a paperback, I

YOUNG BLOOD

Leandro G. Rafanelan

felt some ways to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Welcome contributions from the rumi@mozmailing.and below: ...Ed.

holding his personal cross tightly whenever the conversation dwelt on very sensitive matters like violence in the Mindanao front, Church renewal and the plight of the poor. He thought on these issues, I felt, were borne out of a genuine and sincere concern and love for his people.

But what I found hilarious as far as Archbishop Orosa is still anxious at the thought of shepherding the Archdiocese of Manila because of the enormity of its problems, political and economic especially.

"It is most scary for me that I approach this new task, which the Church has given me," he said in an interview with the Union of Catholic Asian News a few days after he received his appointment. "I am told the archdiocese has more poor people than middle class. So, what causes anxiety is that I'm going to be pastor and shepherd to people who are also very poor. A lot are badly surviving, a good number are in squatter disasters and some live under bridges along the canals. That's what I have always heard, I speak of that."

He also echoed one to that interview "the instability of life caused by economic deterioration and the insecurity of the civilian government because of people calling the shots on how things should be done in the country, professional politicians, some of whom are completely distressed from the poor and I think only of how to survive in a political quagmire."

In fact, when we asked Archbishop Orosa why there is still so much poverty and suffering in the Philippines despite the postwar "Asian economic miracle" and the declaration of the local Church in the Philippines (in PCP II 11 years ago to be serving a "Church of the Poor," he said it is because we are too highly politicized.

"I am very sorry to say that the way politics is conducted in the Philippines by Filipinos has been most destructive and made so many people poorer by every election. Is there equitation of poverty? Probably by the way the pure are being taxed, in other words, by the way the system is devised. I do not know, maybe in values. That is what I mean. We have been highly politicized and that is why the poor get poorer and maybe the rich are becoming more powerful."

But I think this political quagmire exists not only among government officials and politicians, but also in the local Catholic Church. When Archbishop Orosa was asked what values we asked him if the Philippine Church has truly become the Church of the poor. His complete reply to this question was:

"Yes and no. Yes on paper, no in reality. I am sorry to say that, but that is the way I perceive it. I could be wrong (hmm) will apologize for but on the present, in the best sense possible. There are some activities that have really made your progress in imbuing the poor within the Church. The beautiful thing that happened in PCP II is that at least it awakened all of us, and I thank God for that.

"However, in actuality, by and large, the local Church is not yet a Church of the poor. There are really touched out to the poor and the Church? Have we really touched out to them making, at least part of a concerted group that will tell us what they want? Have we reached out with projects of compassion, righteousness, love and goodness that will not only make their recipients but part of the movement? Are they just receivers? Or they just passive receptors as Israel, I think? Can they chip in in terms of what they have? Is there goodwill between authorities and the poor? Yes, things like that could be solved. Or have we left them always as victims of the powerful? To all these questions, I am afraid the answer is not yet... not fully yet, not even one half yet in many areas. We still have to address that."

Now that Archbishop Orosa has left, along with other Church activities who envision and struggle for authentic Church renewal, will be praying hard, especially in the next few weeks and months when our new pastor goes about his administration of Manila. I make this emotional yet sincere advice now to our new and beloved pastor, Archbishop Orosa:

I know you intend to create new vicariates for the Archdiocese of Manila with and through the local clergy, as you told us. And I was edified to read in the Inquirer that Sen. Ed Ejercito was moving to the local archdiocesan residence, you just requested for enough space for you and your dog, and a small bed and his medicine in your room. That is touching. It brought to mind the late Cardinal Jaime Sin's room of just simple residence in Lipa. Thank you for being such an edifying new pastor. I think that is what the archdiocese of Manila needs now: an inspired and simple big pastor—long time to lapse.

If I may just ask for a Christmas gift...I would request that you put in the agenda of administration new board of vicariates, administrators and collaborators who would really work for initiatives that are really for the poor, the least and the last, those who would sincerely reach out in them with projects of compassion, righteousness, love and goodness—projects that would not only make those recipients but active participants in the mission of Christ.

If the local Church is still far from being authentically and sincerely a Church of the poor, and therefore a Church where God's Kingdom is truly manifest, it is probably because of the people who have administered it? If I am wrong, then I would say I am sorry.

But whatever, I know, if you must lead the archdiocese of Manila toward a more humane, just and authentic witnessing of the Gospel values by faith that does justice, then I think the first big task at hand is how to get rid of the other "dogs." We only have enough for Fury, your cute canine friend. The rest will have to go. Bishop Orosa, welcome to a challenged archdiocese.

Leandro G. Rafanelan, SJ, is editorial assistant of Regalo (Pepe Philippines and media liaison of the Catholic Mass Media Awards).

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Supreme delights

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Ramón L. Harper

All they say, horror has three names: The following information is somewhat behind schedule but still interesting. It comes to you courtesy of a reader, Nale, who lives in New Jersey and is apparently as fond of trivia as her aunt. In these times, it seems many we need not heavy reading but some lighter stuff. But for those of you who prefer weightier matters, the Nale's letter is also for you. Here's what she writes (Word in delicately put it. "Bones and Bones Valley" and Having Off Heads:

"On this day (Oct. 30) in 1931 Jane Austen's first novel, "Sense and Sensibility," was published. Early reviewers found it to be "a genteel, well-written novel" as far as domestic literature" went, and "just long enough to interest without fatiguing. Virginia Woolf would take a different view. Nonetheless, it seems to me that we owe more than merely to give Jane Austen the supreme delight of dividing their heads off. (Think of so many of our public figures...oops).

Today is All Hallows Eve or Halloween. The modern holiday's origins are hazy, and it might have been honoring the supernatural blending of the world of the living and the world of the dead. Halloween is based on a Celtic holiday called Samhain. The festival marked the start of winter and the last day of the year. It was a time when fairies, ghosts and bad spirits were free to roam the earth. It was believed that the dark of winter allowed the spirits of the dead to transgress the borders of death and haunt the living.

Eventually, Christian holidays developed in reaction to the same time. During the Middle Ages, there [illegible] known as All Saints' Day or All Hallows' Day. The holiday honored all of the Christian saints and martyrs. Medieval religion taught that dead saints regularly intervened in the affairs of the living. On All Saints' Day, churches held Masses for the dead and put boxes of the saints on display. The night before this celebration of the holy dead became known as All Hallows' Eve. People baked soul cakes, which they ate and left out for the dead. Children dressed and set out lanterns carved out of turnips to keep the ghosts of the dead away. Pumpkins did not grow in Europe and so did not become a part of Halloween until after Columbus discovered the New World.

"Change is today's word in a shortening of All-hallowmas Even (evening), the eyal of All Saints' Day (Nov. 1), the day on which all the saints are honored. However, the celebration originated with the ancient Celts' festival of Samhain. Last night, held on the last day of the Celtic calendar to celebrate the end of summer and beginning of winter, the season of death. The Celts believed that on that night, the line between the living and the dead evaporated and the spirits of the dead returned to mingle with those of the living.

"Suggested Dogie: When the Catholic Church came to England, it attempted to give proper Christian celebration such as ours and chose the day of Samhain as the vigil for their celebration of all the saints. The saints were the solid counterpoint of the profane and sacred we now celebrate on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. The pumpkin lantern (jack-o'-lantern) was originally a Irish custom placed in windows on Halloween to scare away the spirits of the dead that were supposed to wander about that night. The customs of today's children is a

evidence of the growing sense of perpetual excuse among our citizens. But I know their personal experiences are borne out by statistics. An unimpressively high percentage of respondents in national public opinion surveys report having had personal encounters with criminals.

The media may headline sensational crimes like the kidnap-for-if Cecil-Jolo executive thriller or the kidnapping of 10-year-old Kristel Tiu, but the ordinary crimes that happen to us, as far as the ordinary Filipinos are concerned, it's the constant nagging and personal threat of petty crime and street violence that really scares them down. When parents cannot sleep at night because their children are not home yet, or might have been kidnapped, held up or God-knows-what-other-horror-has-befallen them, society as a whole is threatened and destabilized.

* * *

I MUST disagree, though, with anti-crime advocates who seem to believe the application of the death penalty is enough deterrent to criminals.

It's a cliché of law enforcement that it's not the severity of the punishment that deters criminality but rather the certainty of apprehension and prosecution. Still, it's true. A lethal injection is a long distance away for the criminal. What concerns him is whether the police are capable of finding him, and, once found, bringing him to trial and not compromise when time comes to convict him.

When murderers and hold-up men can operate with impunity, as they currently do, preying especially on helpless students, we can only conclude that there is either are being intimidated—if not encouraged—by authorities. It's this suspicion... and how... that eats away at the contract of trust between people and society. It's what convinces young people like my niece and her friends that it's a jungle out there, and ordinary people like Chanto can count on no one for protection.

Inevitably, this also leads to anarchy, for when it's every person for himself and herself, there are rules apply and no loyalties, not even to country, except.

Telling a 'kutsero' off

LETTERS

RAMOS, Daniel's letter about retired cruelty ("Unreasonable cruelty to a horse," PH, 10/18/03) caught my attention because I found myself in the same situation in Binondo sometime ago. But I did not stand by and watch like Ricardo did.

I got out of my car and approached the "kutsero" who was incidentally beating his stallion horse. "Stop that!" I really said. "Or I'll report you to the SPCA and the fine." My angry voice must have convinced him that I meant business. The dozens explained that he had to pick up passengers waiting downtown. "That's how I earn my living."

In his meantime, the poor horse was lying prone, frothing in the mouth. "He's dying of thirst," I said. "Why don't you ask for some water from the church?" He went in and came back with a can of water. The horse raised its head and finished it all. He offered a second can and the thirsty animal drank it all again. He was back on his feet right after.

"That horse owes money for you. You'll not have food on your table if the horse, or take care of him." I then told the man. Our driver was surprised to see the kutsero so cooperative. "You're lucky master, that he's not hostile," he said.

That's when I learned that we have to ask negative emotion sometimes when correcting unfair practices. You would save a life doing that.

—EDUEL ESPERIDIÓN, Manila

Mail was faster than complaint

REFERENCE is made to the letter-complaint of Edwilin T. Batia on Nov. 5, 2003 titled, "Very slow or lost mail."

Our initial reaction was to check with the Pasuquin Central Post Office regarding the location of her parcel from England, supposedly mailed on Sept. 22, 2003.

According to postal inspector Raul Bhernejas, the parcel arrived on Oct. 10 at the Pasuquin City Central Post Office. Since there were no deliveries on weekends, the post office instead delivered the parcel on Tuesday, Oct. 14.

Batia already got hold of the package by the time she received published the letter-complaint on Nov. 5.

Thank you for bringing the matter to our attention.

—ESTELA PERLADO, public information officer, Philippine Postal Corp., 4/F Central Office Building, Liwasang Bonifacio, Manila

Getting tough on kidnapping

I AGREE it's time to get serious, get tough on kidnapping. I write as a Chinoy (Chinese-Filipino), overwhelmed (un and close to despair) with the new wave of kidnappings and the death of Benji Ng.

I agree that what's needed is a strong state, but will quickly qualify this is different from the rhetorical strong republic the President talks about. And I will suggest, in addition to all this, that civil society, especially the Chinoy community itself, needs to act.

A lot of what's being said about kidnapping reduces it to a problem of criminal syndication. Given that analysis, it's not surprising people look for solutions in terms of a toughed anti-crime campaign, from the eviction of kidnappers to tighter security precautions by Chinoys, arming themselves to the teeth and hiring more bodyguards, for example.

But what has this done? The government has now conducted several raids, killing several alleged kidnappers, including one of the top syndicate bosses. But this new get-tough does not appear to bring the syndicates to their knees. In fact, the kidnappings continue unabated.

I propose we expand our analysis to look at kidnapping as a very serious sign of a weak state, and by weak here I do not mean "soft" but—echoing among policymakers, such as the late vice-president of the death penalty: I mean an ineffective state, weakened (imperial) because of corruption and ill-fighting.

Deep down, the Chinoys do know the problem is a weak state. They wonder if the Chinoy community isn't just being caught in the inter-criminal politics, such as the anti-drug phenomenon of the death penalty: I mean an ineffective state, weakened (imperial) because of corruption and ill-fighting.

Deep down, the Chinoys do know the problem is a weak state. They wonder if the Chinoy community isn't just being caught in the inter-criminal politics, such as the anti-ZTE-NBN issue is trying to shame her government to weaker than it already is. An alternative view is that the kidnappings are being staged by pro-GMA forces themselves. After all, her arm-on-terror actions have become more and more irrelevant, so maybe it's time to create domestic terror and, when the right time comes, to have her prove her mettle as the Iron Lady.

"Bring in any mga kidnappers!" the plea only read at Ng's funeral yesterday. But the police are, in fact, executing the kidnappers, usually as the issue of amnesty. The response from both Chinoy and non-Chinoy Filipinos has been cynicism and paranoia. Were they really kidnappers, or were they fall guys? If they were in fact the kidnappers, was it possible they were rubbed out immediately so they wouldn't spill the beans on who their bosses are?

There are far too many horror stories from Chinoy kidnapping victims, about entering a police station or a military camp and recognizing their kidnappers, this time in uniform. "Law enforcers," experts in removing bribes and protection money from citizens, now see greater windfalls through kidnapping for ransom.

I will reiterate: We are not talking about building a strong republic, an IMF proposes. We mean is of strengthening a system that's already rotten to the core, creating more bureaucracies and procedures which will in fact open new opportunities for more horrendous forms of extortion, more kidnapping for ransom. Remember, for example, the proposal to arm bar-piggy officials? That was a classic example of a ridiculous "strong republic" vision, tantamount to arming the petty thieves to protect the public. From whom, I will ask, from the thieves' own bosses?

We need a strong state that doesn't play games, that doesn't play with more lives. Being "strong" means being consistent in applying the law, rather than the occasional staged raid and execution.

I did want to comment as well on what the Chinoy community itself needs to do. Mainly, we need to address the racist undertones in this kidnapping. We have to ask why the Chinoys are being targeted, "favored" once, say the tsinoys.

The answer may be in a rather paradoxical situation. On one hand, precisely because the Chinoy has become Filipino, there is much greater interaction with mainstream Filipino society. On the other hand, there is still a minor chasm-ing, a corner of "ngo" and "sha" no-hoch sides, sometimes sharpened by the visible Chinatowns, Chinese schools, Chinese newspapers, Chinese temples. Note that these institutions are not "bad" in themselves. I have their existence because of their contribution to cultural diversity.

The problem is that these "inside" institutions stand out in an economic context, of perceptions that all Chinese are wealthy, and that the wealth comes from political connections.

It does not help that there is as much conspicuous consumption as well, from the lavish furniture to Chinoy schoolchildren toting P20,000-cell phones. To use the Tagalog expression, *umiwas ang mga mata*, observers' eyes because "kas." I wouldn't call it envy. I wonder at times how a bodyguard feels, risking his own life and limb to protect a Chinoy kid with an allowance several times his salary. The temptations to cooperate in an inside job are not surprising.

The solution isn't going to come with a tokenistic reduction of conspicuous consumption. There has to be a real transformation in lifestyles, most effort from wealthier Chinoys toward philanthropy.

I know of quite a few Chinoys who are doing this, maybe too quietly (for example, how many people know that the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce have built some 2,700 two-classroom buildings for public schools throughout the country at an average cost of P500,000 each? And that an impressed President tossed over to the Federation P60 million and honest President Estrada P1 billion P150 million from his Countryside Development Fund to construct more of these buildings?

I will admit I am on the brink of despair myself, wondering if the Chinoy or Chinoy is wanted at all in the Philippines. And then I remind myself of the heroism of driver Alberto Reposoni and payo (nanny) Manuel de Dios, who last week resisted the kidnappers who were trying to take their ward, 10-year-old Gelica Yu. Unfortunately, Yu was taken and Reposoni and De Dios were shot and critically wounded. The newspapers, sadly, no longer mention the drivers and the payo.

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Comments to mgaa@philstar.net

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bongcaya

GRUDGE SEEN MOTIVE

3 snatched in mosque slain

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Three Muslim men were abducted as they prayed inside a mosque in Tugaday village here late Tuesday and were later found murdered.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko said gunmen barged into the mosque in Sitio Limong around 9 p.m. and took brothers Canson and Bong Jaurus and Sedelin Galim.

Kyamko said only the victims were inside the mosque at the time.

He said an team of troopers of the abduction came in, soldiers were sent to track down the kidnappers in the hope of rescuing the victims.

Kyamko said soldiers failed to catch up with the suspects but found the bloodied bodies of the victims in a nearby village.

"Unfortunately, their bodies were recovered after some shots an hour in Sitio Mornigan in Barangay Bituk with multiple gunshot wounds," he said.

The abduction came a few hours before anti-terrorism czar Angelo Reyes was to visit the Southern.

Reyes has recently been appointed as anti-kidnapping czar after a surge in kidnappings in the country.

But Kyamko said the abduction was probably not in connection with kidnappings perpetrated by organized groups such as the Abu Sayyaf, adding he was inclined to believe grudge was the motive in the crime.

Even then, Kyamko said the military and the police were continuing their efforts to identify and arrest the suspects.

In the developed, Reyes said kidnappings in Mindanao pale in comparison with what has been occurring in Metro Manila.

"I was informed that there has been no noticeable or dramatic increase in kidnappings in Mindanao compared to Manila," Reyes told reporters at the Southern Command headquarters here.

For the month alone, at least seven abductions occurred in Metro Manila and in Central Mindanao.

The latest was Sunday's foiled kidnapping of couple Bey and Susan Hilbero of Capestrano, Talisay Bacolod.

Kyamko said the military considers the Abu Sayyaf as the main threat to the safety of civilians while the Pentagon gang comes in second.

"We consider Abu Sayyaf as the main threat because of their number and the economy they have established in kidnapping," Kyamko said.

But Reyes said the government was also on the lookout for men in uniform who could be involved in kidnappings.

"We are looking deeper into it. Our concern is to get rid of these few scalawags, they are giving (our) institution a bad name," Reyes told Inquirer in an exclusive interview. *Julie T. Alipala, PDI Mindanao bureau with AFP*

ROUNDUP

PNP order hailed

CAMARINES SUR—Malaysia's Sultana Kaja hailed a recent order of the Philippine National Police to end the practice of groups shopping on holidays and calling drivers to buy fabricated gifts or donations purportedly for their projects or gatherings. The order said the practice is not only illegal as it impedes the flow of traffic, but could also cause traffic accidents. *Jocelino Hapos, PDI Camarines Sur Desk*

Robbers take payroll money

SAMAR, Oriental—At least three unidentified men carrying knives ambushed and robbed a Philippine National Police (PNP) employee of P130,000 on Nov. 14 in Barangay Cogon-cogon, Basey, Samar, police said Monday.

Senior Insp. Rodolfo Cadiz, chief of the Basey PNP, said Sheridan Cadiz, a member of the Eastern Samar PNP, was on his way to the municipal hall to withdraw the money when the robbers struck.

Cadiz said the victim was riding a motorcycle when the robbers blocked his path and took the money. *Rudy T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bill abolishing SK mixed

BAMBAM CITY—The provincial council approved a resolution opposing a bill that will abolish the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK).

Vice Governor Rodolfo Bautista said the resolution was "contradictory to the constitutional provision that calls for empowering the youth and encourages participation in the affairs of their constituency." The bill is now awaiting third reading at the committee on local government.

Ria Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Queezon church robbed

LUCENA CITY—A male visitor who introduced himself as a "religious brother" is suspected of robbing the office of Roxcon Catholic Church in Brgy. Barra-Kanluran on Nov. 13 inside the bishop's mansion in Barangay Isabang. Police said the man took about P150,000 in cash and check worth P150,000, all donations for the church's charity program. A maid told police the man's goal so far: robberies the suspect, who introduced himself as "Brother Antonio" from Bantaas, was looking for Mayon. Since the bishop was still sleeping, the janitor told the guest to wait at the bishop's office. Left alone, the suspect allegedly forced open the office's drawers, seized all valuables and left.

Julie T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Drunken men kill cop

CAMP INGLES I.M. Laguna—A policeman was killed and another seriously injured in a drunken encounter between security guards from a passenger jeep in Barangay Mamitu, Rizal, Batangas. Police said PO1 Fernando Luna, 28, assigned to the Rizal police station, was murdered at the Mamitu checkpoint. Police said Luna's partner, Police Senior Insp. Danny Salonga and Pfcpl. Ruben Bagpal shared the property on Saturday night. Bagpal and Salonga, who witnessed the killing, said Luna's gun and other personal effects were also missing at first. Luna replied that he was looking at them. Luna replied that "it was nothing" and left refused himself as a police officer. This angered the suspects who shouted Luna. Police said Luna was forced to the ground by the suspects. Luna's gun, Bagpal grabbed Luna's gun and shot him at close range. Residents rushed Luna and the wounded suspect to the nearby Rizal-Batangas hospital where both were declared dead on arrival. Police said Luna's gun and other personal belongings were recovered from the suspects. *Alarice Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mangled bodies found

CABIAO, Laguna—Police found two severely mutilated bodies in separate incidents on a garbage bags dumped at a banks road in Sitio Bulihan, Barangay Sala last weekend. Village residents were in easy reach to have police that the two were garbage bags containing a foot and a leg. Police said the bodies were found in the area, police found a headless woman's foot in brown maong and underwear inside a garbage bag. Another was found inside a similar bag some 10 minutes away. Police also found a second body in pink jeans and without legs in a large bag in the Barangay Sala area a few meters away from the bodies. Police said witnesses did not see or hear any vehicle along the road hours before Nov. 22. Barangay. The police had begun investigation during ground for summary execution or gang killings.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

RAINBOW IN A WAKE

A wide political spectrum turned out to pay their respects to the wake of journalist Joe Burgos in San Miguel, Bulacan. The wake briefly became a quiet movement on its own by side for individuals who would otherwise be filling the air with opposing views—Rep. Satur Ocampo, Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Palace spokesperson Ignacio Bunye, lawyer Harriet Demetriou and Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Garcia: Don't blame me for Camacho's resignation

By Jhonnex Magallanan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS) president and general manager Winston Garcia insisted he had nothing to do with the resignation of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

"I refused to believe that because I do not drink there are one hour a secretary of finance who can be that insensitive to resign just because he does not control GSIS," Garcia said in a radio-station interview yesterday.

Garcia was reacting to the report that came out in the Inquirer on Saturday that Camacho quit because of policy differences with Malacañang over the handling of issues backed against GSIS.

Camacho had recommended that Garcia be removed as GSIS president and general manager but President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did not act on it.

Garcia maintained that the GSIS had nothing to do with the problems faced by the Department of Finance, such as the ballooning budget deficit.

"It is the biggest budget deficit ever in Philippine history," Garcia added. He said the treasury's budget deficit now has reached P200 billion from P80 billion in the past two years.

He also assured the GSIS members and insurers that Camacho's resignation because it had no effect on the pension fund.

"His resignation will not help or affect the GSIS," he said in an interview over radio station dzLA.

There were insinuations that the President decided to keep Garcia because he was a victim of one of the influential political clans in Cebu.

Garcia is the son of Cebu Gov. Pablo Garcia, the President's ally in Cebu and Lakas-Christian Muslim Democratic leader in the government.

Garcia, however, described the insinuations as "unfair" saying his family in Cebu was nothing compared to the political tsunamis in Manila.

He said he believed that the President did not remove him from the GSIS because of his good performance.

"The problems with the other people, they refused to acknowledge our performance, in fact in my two years in (this) service, I generated the biggest net revenue for the GSIS since its inception," Garcia explained.

Garcia said he believed that his being a policemaker (from the province) was the reason why he was constantly being criticized.

Pensions had doubled the GSIS to restore trust because of delays in the release of members' benefits.

NPA executes Army sergeant for 'sins vs people'

LEGAZPI CITY—The New People's Army on Monday claimed that they have already executed an army hostage, Sgt. Aurelio Sandoy, who was abducted on Wednesday last week in Barangay Sinamoc, Guinobatan, Albay.

Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Greg Lanuza said they executed the executive as retaliation by the chief of the Southern Mountain Command based in Albay.

"Sandoy was sentenced to death because of his anti-people activities. He was the head of the so-called re-engineered special operations team of the military whose main task is to poison the mind of the people through psy-war operations," Rosal said in a phone interview.

He said Sandoy's abduction was a special NPA operation.

Army spokesperson Capt. Marlon Ochoisa said the Inquirer that there are reports on the execution but no confirmation has reached Southern Command as of press time.

He said based on intelligence information, Sandoy was seen alive on the same as about 8 p.m.

Sandoy was earlier abducted by about 15 members of the New People's Army in Guinobatan through an NPA checkpoint.

He was riding a motorcycle with [illegible] Florencio from Barangay Gaogaon, also of Guinobatan, going to the 22nd IB headquarters in Tabaconas, Ligao City when guerrillas stopped them in the boundary of Barangay Mauraro and Quibongbongan, about 2.5 km from the station of the Alpha Company.

Army Capt. Domingo Rhondo said the gunmen, upon recognizing Sandoy, stopped the vehicle and took the sergeant, but ignored Florencio when Florencio introduced himself as a civilian who just hitched a ride with Sandoy.

Sandoy was the town leader of the re-organized Special Operations Team of the Philippine Army operating in Guinobatan, Joyce Balallesca and Bella Miller, *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Population issues show liberals in Muslim clergy

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Muslim clergies of the Philippine listed the Ulemas of Diplomacy whose more liberal views on the birth control issue than other Catholic Church counterparts, the Philippines Commission (Papacies) here said.

In a press briefing in this city Papacies General Mitchiavas announced Bishop Edwin Quijano said that although the Catholic Church and Muslim hold similar views on birth control during the 2000 Cairo population conference conservative Muslim religious leaders took more objectively at the government's reproductive health and birth control programs.

'Fatwa'

Quijano said the Philippine Council the center to issue basic Islamic Divine Insight (Fatwa) to support the so-called "pillars of reproductive health programs" that the government is considering.

Under House Bill 4244 and Senate Bill 2130, dubbed among Church-backed proposals as the "tri-bills" or the "evil trinity," the full range of reproductive health programs are informed choice, which Quijano said "definitely" includes abortion, respect for life, unprotected, and birth spacing.

Quijano said Muslim clergies have painstakingly gone through "three" consultations with the members in some up with a much-awaited collective opinion on the issue of reproductive health or family planning. Sheik E. Abdulmajeed, PDI Mindanao Bureau

TV more child-friendly now, says group

CEBU CITY—The number of child-friendly TV programs has been increasing, a sign that TV networks are becoming more sensitive in protecting children from sexy, violence, and obscene commercialism and in pushing positive Filipino values for young viewers, a group said.

Rolando Rivera, president of the Southeast Asia Foundation for Children's Television (SAFCT), said TV programs for children "could have been triggered by the launching four years ago of the "Sarah TV Seal", a national award bestowed on TV programs classified as child-friendly.

Rivera said from 15 shows in 2000, the number of child-friendly programs rose to 32 in 2001 and 29 in 2002.

This year, he said the number went up to 45. *Anthony S. Alfado, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Inquirer story helps stop slaughter of dugong

MAYO, Davao Oriental—As Inquirer story on the possible extinction of sea cows in the 23,000-hectare Pujada Bay has been fortunately led to a stop in the killing of the mammals.

The story, which exposed the hunting and slaughtering of the animals and the dangers they face from garbage dumping and slaughtering of the animals, has been read by local officials.

Until Pujadillaga, that community environmental resources officer (CENRO), said local fishermen realized that sensitive hunting was decimating the already less dugong population.

Fishermen also found out that hunting the animals for their meat was illegal.

Catching and slaughtering dugongs are punishable by imprisonment of six months and fine ranging from P1,000 to P2,000.

Since the massive information campaign triggered by the Inquirer story, Pujadillaga said residents of Barangays Lawigan, Manuel and Bud as stopped hunting and slaughtering the animals.

The slaughter of dugongs was common in those villages.

"There is no more massive catching and slaughtering of the endangered dugong in Pujada Bay since the fishermen came out with a story on the dangers of catching and slaughter big of dugongs here. They realized that dugongs, which are endangered marine mammals, must be preserved," said Pujadillaga.

Former President Fidel Ramos declared the Pujada Bay in 1994 as a protected seascape and landscape.

Alfrex D'Aucon, chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources here, said Pujada Bay is the dugong's sanctuary.

Pujadillaga said urban complicates the dugong preservation progress in the locale's lakeside town.

"Dugong meat tastes very much like that of cow but sells much cheaper," he said.

At local wet markets in the province, dugong meat sells for P50 to P120 (kilo) compared to about P120 for lean beef.

Garbage is also threatening the animals.

Pujadillaga said after the story came out, Mayor Francisco Rabat banned the dumping of garbage in the bay.

Dugong is one of only four living members of the mammalian order of sea cows, sirenia, and the only remaining herbivorous aquatic mammal. *Cris Pinto, Mindanao Bureau*

The other sirenians are Trichechus manatus (The West Indian manatee), Trichechus inunguis (the Amazonian manatee) and Trichechus senegalensis (the West African manatee).

Dugongs can be 2.4 to 2.7 meters long, and weigh between 230 to 360 kilograms. *Ferdinand O. Zamudio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Making daily living a regular commune with nature

THE STRUCTURES don't stop the developers from putting as much green as they wanted.

IT'S not every day when denizens of the metropolis can escape from the repetitive demands of modern living, to the comforting, liberating reaches of nature. Such an idea, however, isn't an impossible one, as Montgomery Place, Ayala Land's venture into premium town houses, promises to make daily living a regular commune with nature.

Located at the heart of Quezon City Montgomery Place features residences that emphasize the homeowner's need for a homey atmosphere and its corresponding conveniences. The elite is already a wondrous sight to behold, and plans are currently being implemented for its further beautification.

Jose Juan Jugo, Ayala Land Inc.'s division manager of Residential Buildings Group, expounded on the project's landscaping enhancements.

"The land is 7.3 hectares. We try to put as much greenery in every open space as we can. We're in the process of schooling with the architects and landscapers, looking at different areas and trying to see which types of trees are suitable, given our parameters and requirements."

Landscape creativity

Montgomery Place is very conducive for landscape creativity, as 50 percent of the development space is allotted for it. This allows more than ample room for improvement opportunities. "It's very flat terrain, so there's no need for excessive earthworks in plant zones. We just have to find the correct species or combination of plants to get the design we want," said Jugo.

There have been no hitches in designing and implementing the landscaping. The only limitations are those involving the sizes, kinds, or growth periods of trees. Very big ones, for instance, cannot be transplanted because of the existing structures. The structures, however, didn't stop the developers from putting as much green as they wanted.

Esthetic cultivation

"Whatever we cannot landscape, we will hardscape," Jugo adds. Key portions of the condo will be decorated with designs and patterns made of stamp concrete to make them look more visually interesting. Outdoor is also added into the sidewalks, which will be enhanced with artistry using various stones.

And the esthetic cultivation doesn't stop there. "We're going to the extent of landscaping over-private property. We're going to put vines sprouting on walkers within private property, with the owner's approval, of course. We're doing it on all our curve walkers, free-of-charge," according to Jugo.

While citizens parts of Montgomery Place are already replete with well-tended vegetation, certain walls and other bare spaces will be tastefully jazzed with carefully crafted flower boxes and room trellises. Plans will add more visual texture to the already-inviting colors of the townhouses.

Commitment

Utilizing the full potential of the area accomplishes Ayala Land's commitment to exploring all possible avenues to address specific needs of the market. Upon careful analysis of these needs, much attention is given to beneficial modifications. This focus in landscaping and beautification further upgrades the already high standards inherent in the company's implemented master plan.

New homeowners have found a suitable place, aptly enough, in this environment that proudly combines all these quality-centers details.

Montgomery Place has provided respite from the hustle-and-bustle of city life, its growing community of residents discovering on a daily basis that to experience the touch of precious flora needn't bring one to faraway outskirts.

CERTAIN walls and other bare spaces will be tastefully jazzed with carefully crafted flower boxes and room trellises.

Ayala Land supports Capitol Hills members' call for transparency

By Jerry Esplanada

(Last of two parts)

AYALA Land Inc. has expressed full support to a call by Capitol Hills and Golf and Country Club members for transparency in the Quezon City Club's financial deals with the property giant.

Ayala Land, the country's largest and most experienced real estate developer, also cited Capitol's "vigilant membership" for their move.

In a statement sent to the business, the Makati City-based corporation said it "supports any action for better corporate governance."

Ayala Land also believes that "greater participation by the individual members is in managing the affairs of the club with greater value for every member.

"Therefore, a vigilant membership is a valuable asset which should be encouraged in management accountability to members and should always be a fundamental part of any organization's long-term strategy," the final added.

Transparency

A group of Capitol Hills property owners filed earlier an ejectment suit against Ayala Land to compel the golf club to provide a full disclosure of the financial details of their joint project, the Ayala Hillside Estates in Old Balara, Quezon City.

According to former Ambassador Eduardo Ithagarta and Reposo Flores, among other club members, all they were asking was "transparency."

Ayala Land's advisors to Capitol Hills totaled P406,873,041 (including accrued interest of P107.5 million) in December 2001, according to files of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

SM CITY Marilao

SM City Marilao opens Friday

SM CITY Marilao, the 17th SM Supermall, will be open to the public on Nov. 28.

Strategically located in a sprawling 200,298 square meters property on MacArthur Highway, SM City Marilao is situated on a thoroughfare leading to other heavily populated towns like Meycauayan, Obando, Bocaue and San Jose del Monte.

Although still agricultural in nature, Marilao is rapidly converting its land into residential and industrial sites as evidenced by the presence of 63 residential subdivisions and 53 factories.

SM City Marilao will have 89,338 sq m and easy levels of great shopping, leisure and entertainment.

The mall's design and construction team includes Design International, a foreign design consultant for the mall; M.V. Consultants and Associates, architects; Steel Gold City Builders, general contractor; and L.A. Campbell and Associates, project manager.

Shopping, eating out

Residents in Marilao and nearby towns can look forward to shopping at the SM Department Store and the Super SM Hypermarket. The supermall will have SM accessories like the SM Appliance Center, ACE Hardware, Our Home, Parisian Personal Care Store, Surplus Shop and Toy Kingdom as well as fashion boutiques, jewelry and home stores, novelty shops and service outlets. It will also have computer and electronic stores for the cyber generation.

Eating out options include food hall...but at the SM Food Court as well as an exciting mix of international food chains like Pizza Hut, KFC, Wendy's and Dunkin' Donuts; local food chains like Greenwich, Tropical Hut, Chowking and Mang Inasal as well as cool restaurants like Potato Corner, Popeye's Chicken, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Nacho Bar.

The mall will have four state-of-the-art cinemas with a total seating capacity of 2,223 as well as amusement centers. Shoppers will have ample space with 3,771 slots.

Managing soil erosion. . .

From page B-10

reported that we lose 1 million to 7 million hectares of farm lands due to soil erosion and other forms of land degradation each year.

At present, soil erosion has already affected almost 1.2 billion hectares of arable and grazing land—an area larger than that of the United States and Mexico combined.

String on a time bomb

Failure to address soil erosion is like sitting on a time bomb. A landslide caused by soil erosion can damage life and properties and during floods or heavy downpours, soil erosion may result in human, roads and other expensive infrastructure getting washed away," warned Bioengineering Corp. geotechnical engineer Eugene Leo Lapore during the Philconstruct 2001 event organized by IA Exhibit and Co. early this month.

Lapore works for a Davao City-based firm specializing on advanced engineering geotechnologies in preventing slopes, river banks, building mechanically reinforced earth-retaining walls and thermal linings.

His expertise is a specialized branch of civil engineering that blends the scientific analyses of soil and rock with the experience of the engineer to find practical solutions to problems of planning, design and construction.

"Simply put, our firm is one of the few companies here in the country whose main job is to protect properties and certain areas from the damaging effect of soil erosion," explained Lapore.

Various means

Bioengineering uses products of various leading companies in advanced geotechnology like the ACE geogrids and Tensar Corporation's Cellular Confinement System.

ACE geogrids are woven mesh made from high-strength polyester yarns coated with UV-resistant PVC to prevent biodeterioration and attack by acids and alkalis. Its mesh structure assists in the depositing on the specific sites and use.

The Tensar's Cellular Confinement System, on the other hand, resembles a honeycomb's hollow cell structure. It is placed on the ground so that its spaces are filled with soil to improve ground stability and maximize against erosion.

Other alternative solution

In those areas where environmental impact is given more weight, manufacturers also have developed other alternatives to address soil erosion and ground strengthening.

Bioengineering becomes vital as it uses living plant materials as first such high engineering materials for erosion control. It is now regarded as a more environmentally-sensitive alternative to chemical engineering practices.

So apart from synthetic materials, fiber systems has also offered coir-based products, which performs similarly or even better than their synthetic counterparts.

These products, the fiber-log and fiber-Mat, are made of coir fiber, obtained from coconut husk, which is a highly recommended material for biodegradable erosion control products.

These coir erosion control products are manufactured by Bridport Fibers for fiber systems and have been used extensively in the United States and Japan for the past 18 years as a tool to soil erosion problems.

From coco coir

Coir-Mat is made out of coco husk, woven by a machine and locked with coir yarns. This 130 percent biodegradable woven blanket provides higher resistance upon installation while supporting growth and development of vegetation.

Coir-Log is also made from 100 percent coir fiber and bound by a net fiber netting and is totally biodegradable. Coir-log is produced with diameters of 20, 30, 40 and 50 cm, and length of one to six meters.

Coir specifications can be changed or adjusted to suit individual requirements.

"Coir fiber decomposes slowly, making it perfectly suited for bioengineered products aimed at controlling soil erosion. It promotes fast growth of vegetation and helps trap lapsed sediment and water moves at a natural flow. This product is very efficient," described Cynthia Decastosa of Bridport Fibers.

Coir-log can be attached at the edge of a riverbank or a streambank and secured by wooden pegs in the stake or are stacked against the banks of the creek to facilitate revegetation, protect property and moss and provide cohesive value to the environment.

Natural-looking solution

"Using this product for flood or high water damage to streams and lakes provides a more natural looking solution than traditional rip rap or concrete structures," Lapore explained.

He cited several other advantages: low-cost and lower long-term maintenance cost than traditional methods; improved strength over time as vegetation develops; and compatibility with environmentally sensitive sites or sites with limited access.

"Homeowners who have mountain or lakeside property, sometimes value are required to work in difficult economic circumstances or professionals interested in natural restoration of landscapes will find this bioengineering technique useful," assured Lapore.

ECO-LOGS are made from 100 percent coir fiber (from coconut husks) and bound by a coir fiber netting, which is totally biodegradable.

Hail the conquering hero

HUGS!!! Pacquiao waves to the people using the same hands that have made him famous. With him is Manila Mayor Lito Atienza. JEFFERSON SANTOS

By Marjorie Ortiz, Tara Quimundo, and Ed Cabuenagan

COLORED confetti rained on Ayala Avenue as boxing champion Manny Pacquiao passed by in a motorcade, with Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and other supporters yesterday in armored cars.

People on their lunch breaks went out of their offices to wave and take pictures of the conquering hero, who waved back using the same hands that had knocked the lights out of 20 other men.

In Manila, people lined the streets and shouted his name.

"I am very happy... I would have shaken their hands one by one if I had the time," Pacquiao said in Filipino, while on a break from a motorcade that took him from Manila to the heart of the financial district in Makati City.

The current team of Philippine sports is also one of the most sought after endorsers in the upcoming 2004 elections as presidential wannabes line up to get Pacquiao to deliver the knockout punch for them in the political arena.

In an interview after the awarding ceremony in its honor in Makati ceiling, Pacquiao said there have been a number of prospective presidential hets that have approached him to get his support in their respective campaigns next year.

"I can't say their names because people might think I'm politicking," said the winner of the International Boxing Federation's junior featherweight crown.

Pacquiao took home the $550,000 (P31 million) cash prize after he beat Mexican pugilist Mares Antonio Barrera in San Antonio, Texas on Nov. 16.

Yesterday, the President awarded him the Medal of Valor and P1 million in cash.

The Manila city government also gave Pacquiao a condominium unit at the Residencias de Manila in Pandacan.

Cheated wife rats on bank rob suspect

MAE ROSE (client) named Reynaldo Adolfo (refused) from surrendering, he would still have been a free man.

But his wife Lucia (not her real name) is living with another woman in Tagaytay, Cagayan. On Thursday, the angry woman went to the Tagaytay Police station and reported that her husband was one of three men who had robbed a bank in Valenzuela City last June.

After the wife gave the information to the police, Tagaytay Police Chief Joseph Dabalos notified the information with Valenzuela City Police Chief Jose Mercado, who sent a team under SPO4 Henry Blanco to Cagayan.

Armed with an arrest warrant issued by Judge Nena Santos, RTC Hon. Henry Mamaya and his men arrested Adolfo on Friday.

Before said during interrogation, Adolfo admitted to the police that he and two other men robbed the Allied Bank branch on Pan de Bias on June 11. He identified his cohorts as "Arnel" and "Toni."

After the robbery, they divided the P1.4 million loot at an apartment in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City. Edson Tandoc, Jr.

Rubio, 48

MARIO Rubio, father of business columnist Ginger Rubio, Monday died of heart failure at the Chinese General Hospital in Manila. He was 48. He is survived by wife Ernesta and children Mary Grace, Mailene, Marianne, Mark Sammy and Mariville. The remains is in state at 4014 San Jose Extension, Vitas, Manila. Interment will be announced later.

Two suspected cop killers wounded

A RUNNING gun battle left two of four suspected armed robbers wounded in Manila early yesterday morning.

The suspects believed to be members of the so-called Hanover gang are also being eyed in the killing of PO1 Michael Dennis Cagoco on Nov. 2.

At 1:45 a.m. yesterday, three members of the Western Police District (police patrol unit) were on patrol along Quezon Avenue when they saw a white (GK-UBC 349) boat a red light at the corner of Police 22 Street.

Through radio, the lawmen determined that the taxi had been taken from cabbie Hector Gonzaga some four hours earlier along Roxas Street in Sta. Ana.

The policemen gave chase but were shot at as they caught up with the suspects near Gran Street prompting them to abort back.

As the cabbie made an Cavenee corner, he saw he started a lump pan prompting the suspects to let on foot.

Shots data were fired as the four armed men ran in different directions.

When the smoke cleared, suspect Luis de Torre was sprawled on the ground with bullet wounds in his body. He was taken to the Ospital ng Maynila.

The police found on De Torre a Norinco 22 LR pistol belonged to the cabbie. A .38-caliber revolver was also found from him.

Later, the police traced the home of another suspect, a certain Raul Dionisio, whom neighbors said bloodied his face in a scuffle.

Fearing the suspects in the killing of Cagoco, Western Police homicide men head Sr. Insp. Augustino Tanggalin, Jr. said the lawmen was shot dead after stopping a white taxi cab in Malate.

The four-man gang members are suspected of having been involved in other killings in the city. Leila Salaverria

MRT 'campaign' posters off limits to MMDA

By Marjorie Ortiz and Tina Santos

ALAS, there are things which the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) cannot touch in its anti-smoking campaign.

Among such things are those on the commuter posts and the walls of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and the Light Rail Transit (LRT).

MMDA General Manager Bainer Nacionales said yesterday the agency would remove posters and other "advertising materials" on false with out boundaries.

But he added, "We are not touch the ones on the Metro Rail Transit and Light Rail Transit posts."

Nacionales said product and promotional posters, streamers and banners were banned from "littering" mass transportation, unless they were on MRT or LRT property.

Citing claims by MRT officials, Nacionales said operators of the light rail systems were allowed to put up advertisements on their property.

THESE promotional posters on an MRT wall are out of touch of the MMDA. CHI SANTOS

He cited the case of posters of GMA 7 reporter Susan Enriquez, which are plastered all over the MRT's stations.

Nacionales explained that GMA was one of MRT's major advertisers.

Enriquez's posters, which carry her photos and the words "Kay Susan Tayo," could easily be mistaken as campaign materials.

But a network executive, Nessa Valdellon, said the posters were only part of their marketing campaign to promote Enriquez's new show "Kay Susan Tayo!" which would premier on Nov. 30.

On the show Enriquez will tackle women's issues from their civil rights to fashion and beauty tips.

"Kay Susan Tayo!" will air weekly on Sundays beginning 10:30 a.m.

MetroBriefs

Bang in hot water again

FORMER basketball star Paul "Bong" Alvarez is again in trouble. This time for allegedly slapping security guard and damaging the interior of Wilco Palma condominium in Quezon City early yesterday morning. Police said Alvarez, 31, allegedly got upset when the guard, Wilfredo Bacbac, refused to let him into the condominium at 4:30 a.m. Alvarez, who is married to Michelle, went on their way to old Conte Legaspi and Carmina Villaroel-Yllana. Tina Santos

13 fall in drug roundup

FIFTY-THREE suspected drug offenders were arrested in Manila, Monday-Tuesday. SPO1 Arturo Soliva said only a tattoo of South America, was among three arrested for illegal drugs possession. Police said the foreigner was nabbed at the Intramuros restaurant in Manila over the weekend. Other 52 arrested, 13 were drug pushers and 40 are drug addicts. Soliva said the foreigner was nabbed at the Intramuros restaurant in Manila over the weekend. Other 52 arrested, 13 were drug pushers and 40 are drug addicts. Said Mercedes Pedroso said most of the suspects were arrested in Quiapo. Leila Salaverria

Slain in jail

MALABON (S) Jail Inmate Carlos Hayuyan on Sunday was reported to death by his fellow inmates. PO2 Rodeny Egera yesterday identified the suspects as inmates Jaymar Pasco Jomel Roque, 42 Pasco to Ray, 32 and Tangaro Aquino, 29. Police suspect that Hayuyan was killed because he is a rapist. Other inmates, was killed because he was rounding the head suspects intended for other inmates. Edson Tandoc, Jr.

Eucharist congress

FORMER Ambassador to the Vatican and President of Mother Butler's Guild Teodoro Valencia is one of the main speakers at the Eucharistic Congress on Nov. 28 at the Phil Sports Complex at 11 Kennedy Ave., Metro Manila. Quezon City. Registration deadline is on Nov. For information, call 0917-811-9837, 09155 9831-8228, 0917-370-0171, or email at eucharistic congress2003@yahoo.com

Trade exhibit opens

FORMER President Corazon Aquino and Sec. Leon Leviste will open the country's biggest business exposition today at the Manila Hotel. President Macapagal-Arroyo will keynote the event. The 29th PHILEXPORT trade fair runs from Nov. 26 to Dec. 28. For information, call the PHILEXPORT at 631-3041.

Turning bad karma into good

ON TARGET Raymond Dalio

A POLITICAL fan-boss and a disgruntled leader of a civil society group are good. Going after Fernando Poe Jr. to run for President.

Former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and Hector "Boy" Salonga, secretary general of the General Services Administration, are not motivated by blind reasons for wanting FPJ to run. They just want to get a piece of the action, so to speak.

Both Cojuangco and Salonga are angry with President Macapagal-Arroyo because they were not given huge appointments in her administration. They thought their support for her in 2004 would be repaid with well-paying jobs.

* * *

Peping Cojuangco was one of those recently accusing the government during the terms of his sister, former President Cory Aquino.

Mr. Aquino, a plain housewife before she was thrust into politics, didn't know anything about government. That's why she was called the "Dilaw President." That stood for "babaeng walang alam" or completely naive like English translation is overlooked.

And because she didn't know government, she left the management of the country's affairs to her trusted advisers and Cojuangco.

That's the reason why we had several coup attempts during Aquino's term. And toward the end of her term the country experienced frequent brownouts that spilled over to the early months of her successor's term.

* * *

Cory was an "8-to-5" President, referring to the length of time she holds office every day. Like an ordinary clerk, Cory started work at 8 a.m. and "knocked off" at 5 p.m.

She should not be disturbed after 5 p.m. Those were her instructions to her subordinates because she was drinking after office hours.

If PE became President it would be the Cory Aquino presidency all over again with Peping Cojuangco serving as adviser to Erap Jr.

* * *

But's prime reason for the country's highest paid criminals are of comedian Dolphy who was rumored planning to run for congress in Quezon City some years ago.

"Ayaw ko dahil baka ako manalo at kung manalo ako, ano ang gagawin ko? Hindi ko naman ito ma-I because I might win. And if I win, what will I do?"

Dolphy was intelligent enough to know that although he's the king of comedy, he might become an incompetent administrator.

Ah, but FPJ is probably not as intelligent as Dolphy!

* * *

Let's grant the fact that FPJ is a high school dropout and doesn't have any experience in running a public office like the post of barangay captain.

Let's grant that FPJ would have many advisers (his friend, deposed President Joseph Ejercito Estrada included) who would lend their expertise to his presidency.

Still, FPJ would have to make important decisions affecting the life of the nation. After all the suggestions and proposals were placed on his lap, FPJ as president would have to make the final decision.

How do you expect FPJ to make important national decisions when right now he can't decide whether to run or not to run?

* * *

No amount of eavesdropping by the government with the relatives of young Cocoy Gela executive Hello by can bring her back to life.

The government will make by's loss less painful, not only for her family but also for the Filipino people, by promising to salvage a "resettled earth" policy against kidnappers. This means that kidnappers will not be given any quarter.

The government will have to go after kidnap-for-ransom syndicates more intensely than before. It will have to use all possible means to flush out these hoodlets out of their holes and kill them one by one, if the need arises.

Then and only then can the government say that Gela by did not die in vain.

* * *

I condole with Senator Jinx Ejercito Revilla on Saturday and her husband, Jun, over the death of their son Alexander Robert or "Ali."

As a parent, I know how they feel.

I'm at a loss for words in conveying my sympathies.

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Binay fed up

Mayor assails contractor

By Marguee Ortiz

MAKATI City Mayor Jejomar Binay has lost his patience over the stalled paved work along the Chino Roces Avenue Extension by Pateros Street.

Binay yesterday told N-2 Builders, the contractor digging up the thoroughfare, to set a date on when it is going to be done.

Citing complaints by residents of public utility vehicles and owners of businesses, the mayor asked R-2 Builders to explain the delay in its completion.

"We are aware to know when this project will be completed," Binay said.

"What is certain is that the project has made matters a daily reality for pedestrians and commuters," he added.

The mayor said that the completion date, along with other pertinent information about the project, should be posted at the construction site.

The delay in the project, which is part of the Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project being undertaken by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the Department of Public Works and Highways, has gravely affected businesses, travellers and public safety.

Binay noted that the income of public utility drivers had gone down and that some businesses in the area have closed shop, resulting in revenue losses to the city and the community.

The mayor also said that Pateros Town residents and pedestrians live daily with potential hazards to "life and limb."

"The city cannot bear the inconveniences anymore," Binay stressed.

16th bank robbery hits Metro Manila

By Alcuin Papa

ROBBERS struck again in Metro Manila yesterday and carted away P500,000 in the 16th bank heist in the and-nipuhi this year.

Five suspects forged into the Union Bank Urdaneta branch along Quezon Avenue in Barangay City at 1:55 p.m.

The suspects, armed with .45-calibre pistols, disarmed security guard Robert Tangco before going straight to the cashiers and emptying the safe boxes.

Sr. Supt. Ronald Ecillo, the Urdaneta City chief of police, said some of the suspects herded passenger jeepney while others fled on foot.

The robbery took all of five minutes, Ecillo said.

The heist was the 16th in Metro Manila this year, according to the National Capital Region Police Office.

Eight of the bank robberies happened in the southern part of the metropolis under the Southern Police District headed by Chief Supt. Jose Rodriguez.

In Quezon City, armed suspects shot dead a security guard and drove off with an undetermined amount of cash during a similar bank robbery at the corner of Edsa and Roosevelt Avenue at 12:55 p.m.

According to the police, armed men said Andy Ong in the case of a Security Bank van which had just collected money from the 3rd floor but fled at the busy street corner.

Who knows Raul Ramirez was killed and six other persons were wounded when other security guards and policemen from a nearby Central Police District precinct traded shots with the suspects.

With a report from Rina Jimenez

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WHERE'S THE MONEY? Pacquiao in his moments of glory

HBO budgeted $.7M as Pacquiao purse

By Sabrina L. Lagumbay, Contributor

HAS someone's bank account fattened other than that of Manny Pacquiao's?

Reports swirling the Internet have it that HBO, pioneer of the pay-per-view concept, actually paid a whopping $700,000 (P38.5 million) as purse to Pacquiao for his conquest of Mexican featherweight great Marco Antonio Barrera.

The Mexican idol reportedly got a better $1-million paycheck.

Bernie Rimdall's George Rimdall, in his report yesterday, said that at one point in the 12th round, the two HBO announcers let it slip that "while the network had budgeted some $700,000 for Pacquiao's share of the purse, the Filipino's contract somehow paid him just $300,000 for a victorious performance that has to rate as boxing's upset of the year."

Based on what was divulged to media and to his manager, Morty Eberle, Pacquiao was supposed to have received only $350,000. The missing expenses will be deducted from the purse before Pacquiao, his manager, boxing manager and trainers divide the spoils.

So who could have pocketed the other half of the $700,000? This question begs to be answered all the more especially after Viva Sports has come up with a report that right after the fight, HBO had dangled a whopping $15-million, six-fight contract to the Filipino superstar.

This time, however, Pacquiao has told Viva Sports that HBO is trying to entangle a deal directly with Pacquiao's Filipino handlers, effectively cutting off his American agent, Murad Muhammad.

The Filipino champ plans to come to action tomorrow in Manila. Among those on his undercard are Erik Morales and WBA/IBF featherweight champ Juan Manuel Marquez.

Vietnam ready for SEAG party

HANOI, Vietnam—With the kickoff to the Southeast Asian Games just a week away, Vietnam said Monday it is ready to welcome visitors to the country's first major sporting event.

The nonwestside country expects 10,000 foreign visitors, including athletes and officials, during the 22nd Games that will run from Dec. 5-13.

Most of the sporting events will be held in the capital, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), where workers have been sprucing up the venues. A total of 22 sports will take place in 11 cities and provinces.

"Throughout the sports events at the SEA Games, Southeast Asian countries will closely unite, share cultural values and customs, and strengthen mutual understanding with an unwavering will to unified region," said Sports Minister Nguyen Danh Thai, head of the SEA Games Organizing Committee.

"With clear spirit, the organizing committee of the host country has been doing all its best to ensure a successful SEA Games."

That said Vietnam has enough accommodation to house everyone arriving and that traffic jams —so experienced during the opening of Hanoi's Kimmod Stadium in September—will not be a problem because roads have been expanded, police reserve cadre will be used to escort athletes and some streets will be open only to buses.

Participants include athletes from the Philippines and nine other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, plus East Timor. The SEAG, held once every two years, is the biggest sporting event in the region, and 442 sets of medals are up for grabs in Vietnam. AP

YAP

DAVID

Yap-David duel sideshow to PBL leadership tussle

WILLIAM'S James Yap and Alaska's Gary David, the league's top scorers, decide who is the better shot today when their teams collide in the PBL Fleetmore Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

The performances of the top two gunners of the undefeated teams will be crucial when the Paint Masters (4-1) and the Aces (5-2) dispute the sixth feud at 3:45 p.m.

David is storming a leading 34.25 points per game followed by Yap with a 33.6 average.

However, Yap got a lot of support from his equally talented teammates, most of whom are also the PF team that will compete in the coming Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

Shaker Doergen (5-21 tackles) dominated Vico Mineral Water in the second game at 3:45 p.m.

"It's going to be an interesting match-up," said Perlyn coach Leo Austria of the Yap-David duel.

"Both are fine shooters and we guarantee if they score to."

Austria said he is assigning the burly Willy Wilson to smash the 6-foot-2 David.

"I have to make special plans for him (David) because when he plays well, all his teammates play good also," said Austria.

Aside from David, Mountain also relies heavily on Mike Hrinyo, Marjojen Alfad, Christian Cantord and Shalee Bunyo.

For Welcoat, already has seen up to dozen with semifinal scenes like Paul Artadi, Rolbert Dandan, Ervin Sotto and Jovealin Tanghas Mary Anthony Reyes.

STANDINGS W L
Welcoat 4 1
Mountain 3 1
Pasig Utd 3 2
Welfad 3 2
ICTSI 2 3
Sunkist 2 3
Pera Mix 1 4
GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
1:45 p.m.—Welcoat
vs Mountain
3:45 p.m.—Welfad
vs Pera

La Salle-Ateneo tennis match kicks off second semester action

BIÑAN, Laguna — La Salle opens defense of the women's tennis crown against bitter rival Ateneo on Nov. 30 to kick off the second half of the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) season.

The Lady Spikers and Lady Eagles collide at the Rizal Racket Club inside the Rizal Provincial Capitol Compound in Pasig City after a brief opening ceremony at 11 a.m.

University of Santo Tomas, runner-up last season, also plunges into action against defending champion University of the Philippines in the other women's encounter.

It will be De La Salle against University of the East and Ateneo versus UP in men's bouts.

Eight sports in the UAAP calendar will also be played in the second semester.

Women's softball at the UST field and junior volleyball at the UE gym will start Dec. 6, baseball at the Rizal Memorial Stadium gets going Dec. 7, football at the Ateneo field begins Jan. 18, and taekwondo at the UST gym is set Jan. 21-24.

Badminton starts on Jan. 25 at the Rizal Memorial Badminton Hall, judo begins Feb. 1 at the UP gym, fencing gets going Feb. 14 at the Philsports in Pasig City and athletics is set Feb. 19-22 at the Rizal oval.

Meanwhile, the Manila Star-Hog Cheering Competition of the UAAP, which was held last September, begins its league crossover Adv5-Obb through Studio 23 in Brgy. 191 Zone 19, Bicutan from the Catholic Mass Media Awards recently.

Dean Gilda Uy of UP accepted the award on behalf of the league.

Three awardees' action included basketball, the league's perennial centerpiece tournaments, which now runs for Pre Finances at the expense of defending champion Ateneo. Adamson's Lady Falcons prevailed in women's play.

NCRAA HOOPS

PUP posts 157-13 rout

POLYTECHNIC University of the Philippines highlighted a day of intimidation in the 14th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) basketball tournament Sunday with a 157-13 annihilation of City College of Manila in the PUP gym.

It was one of the many lopsided games in memory with Goodwin Ramos even outscoring the entire CCM lineup by 40 as the lad led PUP with 29 points.

In another Group A contest, Abbh Gonpator College downed Rizal Technological University, 91-39. Philippine Maritime Institute whipped St. Benedict, 73-58, while La Salle-Dasmariñas beat New Era University in Group B.

There was another one-sided game in every pro as San Sebastian College of Recoletos defeated AMA Computer College, 99-44, for its second victory in Group A.

The 106 Rayzon, coached by former pro Ridge Mendoza, limited the Rustan Cocktiers-mentioned Cyberangels to just six points in the first quarter and had the game all wrapped up with a 47-21 lead at the half.

Rizal Technological University and National College of Business and Arts turned back separate foes in Group B to catch up with New Era University, Philippine Merchant Marine and St. Benedicts College for the early lead.

NTC' dealt PUP its second straight setback with a 93-88 win and 9CBA put away PSBA, 111-88.

Red Bull owner still keeping Guiao and Co.

By Jaime Ninsuwa

RESIGNATION denied.

Red Bull Barako team owner George Chua yesterday rejected the recovery resignations tendered by his manager and coaching staff, saying "there is ... most certainly no chance" in the Barakos' quarterfinal exit in the Samsung PBA Philippine Conference.

"We are convinced that every member of our team did their best to win and set out nothing more. We have lost but the sweetness of victory and we certainly know how to keep our dignity in defeat," he said.

Chua said coach Yeng Guiao and his staff as well as team manager Tony Chua and team consultant Andy Jao continued to enjoy his trust and confidence and even pointed them for their professionalism and "dedication."

"There are his coach as even member of the quality of men we have in our ranks, highly principled professionals who would not hesitate to put their own jobs on the line as proof of their commitment to the highest level of performance of their duties," said Chua.

Guiao and Co. had offered to quit and give Chua a free hand if he thinks he can coach and manage the team better.

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Barako Bull

BUSINESS

Editor Raoul B. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Carole S. Madamba

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Banks push treasury bill rates higher

(See stock market report on Page B4)

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT'S cost of borrowing—the rate it pays in hopes of treasury bills—yesterday rose due to anxiety caused by the resignation of Finance Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile Camacho and the increasing certainty that movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. will join the May presidential elections.

"The market is extremely worried about the resignation of Camacho and the candidacy of FPJ," said Deputy Treasurer Mina Figueroa.

The benchmark 91-day treasury bill yield, used by banks in pricing their loans, went up by 27 basis points to 6.531 percent while the rate for the 182-day instrument increased by 16.1 basis points to 7.306 percent.

The Bureau of the Treasury led by the Treasurer of Treasury rejected all offers for the 364-day instruments as it would have raised the yield by 51 basis points.

Figueroa said the bids were even conquered by the huge inflow from the existing government securities. The Treasury said P62 billion worth of bills and bonds were maturing this week and some have rolled over, which boosted the market's liquidity yesterday.

With the rejection of the bids for the one-year treasuries, the government was able to raise only P6.3 billion after giving a full award of P4 billion and P2.5 billion for the three-month and six-month notes.

Figueroa said traders were concerned that the government would have a harder time managing the budget deficit without Camacho. In the last 18 months, the government was able to bring down the gap between revenues and expenditures to about the one P9 billion lower than the ceiling.

Camacho said, however, that the team he would be leaving behind would ensure that the budget deficit target of P202 billion this year and P187.6 billion in 2007 would be met.

"The market should disassociate the political front (the financial) but then, that's another can of worms," said the deputy treasurer.

From Nov. 27 to Dec. 2, the government would be offering three-year retail treasury bonds to small investors.

Camacho said the government could raise at least P50 billion from the bond issue although some traders were saying that the market could accommodate much more than that.

Last July, the government raised P74.2 billion from the sale of three- and five-year RTBs. In June 2002, the issuance of retail bonds gave the government about P63 billion in proceeds. Investors could buy a minimum of P5,000 and a maximum of P2 million worth of RTBs.

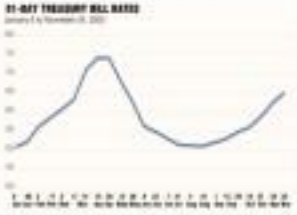
The Treasury said last week that it would extend the December auctions depending on the volume of the RTBs.

The treasury had shelved the December auctions in the middle of this year but changed its mind a month ago. The government admitted that next month would not be a good time to sell securities because banks and investors would rather stay liquid to finance their expenses.

"It is a reality that rates go up (toward) yearend because people are reluctant to lend to the government when they would rather hold on to their cash," added Ednaco earlier.

Treasury bill rates are back to their levels in the first quarter of the year when the market sought a higher return for placements in government securities owing to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE B4)



GMA OKs 'open skies' for cargo in Clark, Subic

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal Arroyo has agreed to adopt an "open skies" policy in the Clark Special Economic Zone and Subic Freeport Zone to lure more international air cargo operators into the country.

The President made the approval during yesterday's executive committee meeting of the National Economic and Development Authority, which she chairs.

The President said the "open skies" policy for cargo would be beneficial for the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark as a cargo hub for Asia and the Pacific.

Clark currently hosts the Asian hub of United Parcel Service while rival Federal Express, which set up its hub in Subic, has expressed interest in moving to Clark to expand its operations.

"Opening up the ASEAN aviation market to foreign and domestic carriers without restrictions would be an effective way to promote the airport as a hub for foreign air cargo carriers," the President said.

She said DMIA's strategic location, which is less than three hours away from all major destinations in Asia-Pacific, makes it an ideal cargo hub even for non-American cargo carriers.

She noted that the government has spent close to P1 billion to improve DMIA facilities to handle more international flights such as P500 million for a new runway, and various sign upgrades worth P19 million.

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'Marking the close' distorts the market

I PAID tuitions for an Alzheimer's patient this morning. I rose to the hospital getting my monthly prescription for 30 Viagra when I saw a young doctor reading the business and laughing his head off. To my delight, he was reading one of my articles as I satisfied him. "Do you know who I am?" "No", he said, "but if you are one of the morons, I am sure she will tell you."

The police have an expression like on Michael Jackson. It is called a pedo file.

A Filipino was arrested for stealing Christmas lanterns. He was given a suspended sentence and ordered to his panel officer.

The Americans are fed up with the war in Iraq. With an ever increasing number of casualties, I am not surprised. They are also fed up with the key but they will stuff themselves anyway next Thursday because it is Thanksgiving Day. Turkey with cranberry sauce is traditional fare.

Here is my favorite story from Bloomberg. It happened in 1989 off the coast of Canada. I have changed the names for obvious reasons but the essence construction was recorded.

"This is Admiral Jeaaway of the battleship Enterprise. We are on a collision course. Please turn 10 degrees south west."

"Sorry Sir can do."

"Look, you know the rules of the sea. Small or boats give way to larger ones so change course now."

"Sorry Sir can do."

"I don't want to pull rank but I command 8 battleships, 12 aircraft carriers, 45 destroyers and a nuclear submarine. So change course now."

"Sorry Sir can do."

"Why is that?"

"We are a lighthouse."

MR. BEARBULL

Ben Nathan

* * *

I was unable to write my article yesterday as I was not feeling well. However, it turned out to be an advantage because I was able to see the market reactions to the complete unexpected resignation of Finance Secretary Camacho, Filipinos and foreigners regard him alike as an efficient and highly competent banker so his departure is seen as a sign that next year, expenditures might spiral out of control. Immediately following news of his resignation, the peso rose to 55.30 and today it opened at 55.39 before moving down at 55.65. All things considered, this is not too bad but, it remains to be seen whether there will be any further resignations.

The stock market took it normally, and after opening 8 points lower, it closed unchanged. This was in part due to value investors remarking the close. All I was hit up from P15.50 to P15.70 on 61,800 shares and AC was hit up to P5 on just 5,000 shares. This practice should be stopped but the PSE allows it to continue. All they need to do is to designate the close as anywhere from 15:30 to 15:35 and the PSE pulls the plug anytime between. This marking up distorts the index and the individual charts.

Foreign brokers, who control our market, did not appear to be unduly concerned and for the first time in two weeks, they turned from net seller to net buyer. They bought TEL and AC, and sold ALI. Last year, I wrote an article stating that I thought AC as for the better investment and it looks, at least for now, that they agree with me. While ALI's growth is rather modest, AC has the benefit of GLOBE's relatively explosive growth plus a nice dividend.

Last year, I wrote up Petron at P1.80 as a good income stock. It promised to pay a regular dividend of 20 cents so at P1.80, it yielded 11 percent. The shares went up to P2.10 but then got stuck in a tight trading range of P1.95 to P2.10. PSE then just upgraded the stock to a BUY with 12 month price target of P3.65.

The 3rd quarter results just announced show Petron's profit for the first 9 months of 2003 is 30 percent higher than the corresponding period of 2002. This means the dividend is earned 1.3 times so it is not impossible that the company will declare a small stock dividend of 15 percent to 20 percent. They have done this three times since they went public. If they do decide to give a small stock dividend, history shows that they would maintain the cash dividend so that investment capital. All this is pure wonder but I believe that BG is floating along the same lines. In any event, at P2.82, investors are hardly mean to any harm on a yield of almost 10 percent.

The degree of risk on the PSEI fell to 1 last Phildevcorp so I reiterate that a technical rally couldn't be far away. The market rose on Thursday and Friday and recovered some 8 points down to unchanged yesterday. Unless there are any further shocks, the rally should continue this week.

P7-B SHARE-SWAP DEAL

Nextmobile backdoor listing readied

By Doris C. Dumlao

PREMIERE Entertainment Productions (PEP) has signed a memorandum of agreement with the shareholders of wireless service provider Nextmobile Inc. on a P1-billion share-swap deal that will pave the way for the latter's backdoor listing on the stock exchange.

The Nextmobile shareholders were Top Mega Enterprises Ltd., Joyrobot Holdings Ltd., Gambosa Holdings Inc., Emerald Investments Inc. and Pendarang Industries and Marketing Inc., PEP president Antonio Dino told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

Under the deal, these Nextmobile shareholders will subscribe to common shares at a par value of 50 centavos per share from the company's unissued shares in exchange of P1 billion. This is to exchange for common shares of Nextmobile representing 97 percent of its capital stock.

The subscription of the company's shares in consideration for the assignment by the Nextmobile shareholders of their shares will take place after both companies complete their capital restructuring.

After the subscription by the Nextmobile shareholders to the PEP shares and the assignment of shares to the company, the Nextmobile shareholders are expected to control about 96.2 percent of PEP's increased capital stock to runs, PEP will own 97 percent of Nextmobile.

In line with the backdoor listing, the PEP shareholders earlier amended the company's charter to implement its capital restructuring.

The shareholders, owned and controlled by businessman Mel Velarde, operates the Nextel cellphone network.

Communications firm sets listing on Dec. 12; sees 50% profit growth

TRANSPACIFIC Broadcast Group International Inc. (TBGI), which is set to debut on the Philippine Stock Exchange on Dec. 12, expects a 50 percent year-by-growth in net profits starting this year on robust expansion of its data infrastructure business.

In a briefing yesterday, TBGI chair Amelia Ng said the company expected to sign up more than a hundred customers with educational institutions by next year.

Ng said there were about 40,000 schools all over the country and it could take as long as 15 years for TBGI to saturate this market alone.

TBGI, which started commercial operations of its satellite facilities in the first half of 1996, generates revenues mainly from Internet, Internet and local loop services subscriptions of schools, hospitals, corporate private sector and government agencies.

It has studied in the education sector, specifically in the rural areas. The company uses digital technology combining satellite broadcast with Internet protocol for data technology.

Ng said the tourism sector also offered a lot of opportunity for TBGI, as a lot of resorts across the country's many tourist destinations were not yet hooked up to the Internet.

Ng said the company has also mapped out a schedule to reduce the cost of connectivity to rural areas. Instead of paying as much as $50,000 for equipment installation, Ng said clients would only have to spend $7,000. To make it even more affordable, the cost is spread over three years, translating to about P30,000 payment for each month.

Ng said the company was not worried about competition because the market for connectivity was very big.

"But I'm very interested if the market is small or if it's a mature industry," Ng said.

For some customers, he said there were too many barriers to entry such as the need for a congressional franchise as well as the acquisition of technology.

"It's not in any business but when you have the technology pieces all together, it becomes very easy—like planting mushrooms," Ng said.

TBGI is offering 70.6 million shares at P1.28 each until the end of this week. It plans to use the proceeds to buy equipment for marketing promotion and working capital.

The company has a 25-year lease agreement with Subic, investors and manage a satellite earth station within the Clark Special Economic Zone, a 25-year Congressional Telecom Franchise for commercial telecommunications and television uplink/downlink as well as a provisional authority to launch radio signals.

The company plans to change its name to Transpacific Broadband Group International Inc. before the listing date. (Sarah C. Bonilla)

Sun Cellular eyes 4% of market by end-2003

By Abigail L. Ho

GOOD NEWS! Digital Mobile Philippines Inc. sees a subscriber base of 800,000 by the end of the year, representing a 4 percent share of the cellular market.

Lance Gokongwei, president and chief executive of Digital Mobile parent Jam Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc., said during an investors' briefing yesterday that the company's Sun Cellular brand hoped to practically increase its subscriber base in the next two months to 400,000 to achieve critical mass by next year.

Critical mass for the brand would be around 1.5 to 2 million subscribers by end-2004.

"We hope to sell about 15 percent of net (subscriber additions) by the end of 2003," he said.

Cellular service provider Globe Telecom Inc. and Smart Communications, including their subsidiaries Innove Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp., currently have the lion's share of the market, being in the cellular service arena for at least 10 years each.

As of end-October, Smart already has more than 12 million subscribers, including the global system for mobile communications (GSM) subscribers of Pilcell's Talk 'N Text brand. With these subscribers Bynet, Smart and Talk 'N Text accounted for 58 percent of the cellular pie.

Globe has 8.1 million subscribers as of end-September. This figure includes the prepaid GSM subscribers of Innove's Touch Mobile.

While the lead of these two players seemed insurmountable, Gokongwei proposed optimism that Sun Cellular could still play catch-up and eventually become a strong no. 3 contender in the market.

"As of October, net connection to cellular phones reached about 600,000," he said.

DISCLOSURES

PRIME Gaming Philippines Inc. will buy 1.5 million of its own shares at a price of not more than P.90 per share in the open market.

* * *

ZENITH BANK of Trade and Industry could not give due course to **LIBI Commodity Corp.**'s anti-dumping case against the importation of sulfuric acid from Japan since it's does not consider the company the representative of sulfuric acid industry in the country.

* * *

ELEVEN directors of **Solidbank Bank** were Stevie Garcia, Bienvenido Ong, Richard Garcia, Tina Fontanar, Gary Garcia, Edda Prior, Aurora Arnaiz, Felix Mascarina Jr., Jose Unson, Wilchenko Mendoza and Ramon Rodriguez.

FIRST Metro Investment Corp. declared a cash dividend of P.06.02 per share. *Compiled by Marian D. Dulnuan, PDN Research*

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Banks push treasury bill …

From page B1

risks associated with the U.S. buyout, uncertainties related to anti-money laundering legislation, and a weakening peso.

Camacho said that the benchmark three-month debt papers still averaged below the government's outlook of 6.5 percent.

Figures showed that the government was prepared to let the three-month notes go up to the level of the central bank's overnight rate of 6.75 percent.

The deputy treasurer said the market was looking for a clearer direction mainly on the political issues.

BUSINESS

FIRST 10 MONTHS

BOI, Peza investments up 21.55% to ₱46.88B

By Michelle V. Rama

INVESTMENTS registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority and the Board of Investments rose by 21.55 percent in the first 10 months of the year to P46.88 billion from P38.56 billion in the same period last year.

Projects approved by the BOI totalled P24.38 billion, or 37.42 percent higher than last year's figure.

Projects registered with the Peza, meanwhile, amounted to P22.498 billion, which was 21.88 percent higher than the last year's. Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II attributed the significant increase to the entry of big-ticket investments in September and October, which includes the P5 billion poured in by Petron Corp. for the upgrading of its refinery facilities to comply with the provisions of the Clean Air Act.

Other major investment projects approved during the first 10 months of the year include the following:

- P4,367-billion biomass and renewable energy project of Visayalai's Bioenergy Inc.;
- P3.461-billion gold mining project of Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.
- P2.254-billion solar wafer project of Sunpower Philippines Manufacturing Ltd.
- P2.136-billion project of IT service provider Solid Broadband Corp.
- P1.888-billion integrated domestic terminal and container yard project of Asian Terminals Inc.

Roxas said the P11.71 billion worth of projects approved in October alone were an impressive 747 percent increase from that of the same month last year.

"All the different sectors are on the upswing," said Roxas.

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PNOC agrees to market Semirara coal

By Reena V. M. Domingo

PNOC Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Company, has agreed to market the coal produced by Semirara Mining Corp. (SMC).

SMC vice president Francisco Aragon said that under the agreement, PNOC-EC would sell Semirara coal to other users such as ceramic manufacturing plants to boost sales and support the local coal industry.

Ceramic makers are heavy consumers of electricity, many of which have their own power plants. Most of these plants run on coal.

"We started this effort early this year and this is mainly to support the local coal industry," PNOC-EC president Rufino B. Romasang said.

In a July interview, Aragon said the country's only major coal producer expected production to grow by 30 percent this year due to its drive to expand its market.

He said the firm projected a total yield of 3.6 million metric tons by end-2003, an increase of 600,000 tons from 3.2 MT in 2002.

PNOC-EC, on the other hand, recently started coal production from the Isarogand Little Baguio mine in Zamboanga del Sur to supply two cement factories in the Mindanao.

The Little Baguio mine, operated under a joint venture Tuloan Overseas Mining Corp., has a capacity to produce 225,000MT of coal every year.

Subic project a done deal, says envoy

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Yojiro Takano said the $113-million Subic Bay port development project should go on as planned as the economic loan agreement between the Philippines and Japan has already been signed.

"It is already a done deal. After the exchange of notes between Japan and the Philippine government, the loan agreement has been signed," a statement from the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority quoted Takano as saying during his visit to this freeport last week.

Takano described as "disturbing" the opposition to the port project. He said, however, he hoped that the opposition would die down and the project would be implemented.

Officials of Olongapo City opposed the project citing environmental concerns.

"I think we should go on with the project as planned. Everything is in place and has been thoroughly studied," Takano said.

SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo and Takano inspected the project site in Cubi Point.

Payumo said it would be embarrassing for both Japan and the Philippines should the port project be shelved.

"If the Official Development Assistance (ODA) for the project is pulled out, the repercussions would be very humiliating for both countries," Payumo added.

The project is funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

Takano also met with several Japanese investors led by Ichiro Tsuda, Subic Techno Park president, last Thursday. Allen Macatuno, PIA Central Luzon (Sbd)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2010 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE fitness

Editor Chele Bensil-Formoso

The field of exercise science is still young, but here are the latest findings

When is the best time to exercise?

Part 1

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Dans

WHEN it comes to convenience and practicality, any time that you can stick to regularly is the right time to exercise.

If you are currently exercising in the morning, afternoon or evening, and this schedule works for you and you feel you have enough energy and enthusiasm for your workouts, don't change anything.

However, if you have been dragging yourself to exercise and you are wondering if switching to another time of the day would make you feel better, here are the latest studies on the best time to exercise.

Now, mind you, experts do not always agree with each other because this field of exercise science is still developing.

Circadian rhythms

According to the American Council on Exercise (ACE), our bodies follow a daily cycle called the circadian rhythms, which regulates everything from body temperature and metabolism to blood pressure.

ACE explains that these rhythms have conformed to our 24-hour light-to-dark cycle, and may be regulated and re-regulated each day according to the environment.

Dr. David Hill of the University of North Texas says, "Our bodies' rhythms are inborn, but we reset them every day when our alarm goes off, when we eat our meals and when we exercise."

Whenever you change one of these things, your body reacts like it is undergoing jet lag. He says your body learns to be fittest at whatever time of day you usually put it to work. So if you're off schedule take it easy because your stamina may be a bit lower.

This can make a lot of difference during a competitive athletic event, so ACE recommends you should train for an upcoming event at the same time you will be competing in it. ACE emphasizes research that shows the ability to maintain sustained exercise is adaptive to circadian rhythms.

In other words, consistently training in the morning will allow you to sustain exercise during a morning marathon longer than if you train in the evening.

Are you a lark or an owl?

If you wake up instantly in the morning with a cheerful attitude to boot, but fade away quickly early in the evening, you are definitely a lark.

If you have a hard time waking up and can't even talk for the next hour, but are alert and energetic at night, you are an owl. An obvious reason, larks feel better with morning exercise and owls work out better in the late afternoon or early evening.

But what if you are a lark who has to beat the traffic rush to get to work and you can only work out in the afternoon? Or what if you are an owl who returns home too late at night and can only exercise in the morning?

If this is your situation, don't despair. Your body can adapt to almost any condition if you give it enough time.

Hill recommends giving yourself at least one month to adjust if you have to switch exercise schedules from morning to afternoon or vice-versa. I know this is possible because I am not a morning person but for reasons of convenience, I have taught a 7 a.m. exercise class for more than 10 years.

People stronger in the afternoon

Your workout is affected the most by the influence of circadian rhythms on body temperature, says ACE.

You get the best workout when your body temperature is at its highest and you get a slightly less than optimal workout when your temperature is low. ACE says that for most people, body temperature is at its lowest about one to three hours before waking up in the morning, and it is at its highest in the late afternoon.

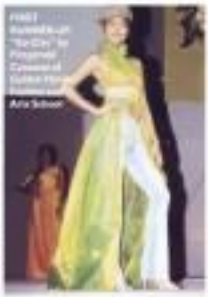
In his research, Hill found that strength is about five percent greater around noon. Aerobic capacity, meanwhile, increases by about four percent in the afternoon.

Anaerobic performance (rapid increase activities like sprinting or jumping for a basketball) also improves by five percent in the afternoon. This

(CONTINUED ON L2)

NANCY Harris (Nancy Hart & Associates, Van Heusen at Activewear Group, Inc.), Andy Hicks, E&J Gallo sales director for South and Southeast Asia, and Loretta Lee, E&J Gallo marketing manager for Asia Pacific

FASHIONISTA [L] Judges Raja Laurel, incl. Rosa Prieto-Rubio and The Top with grand prize winner Mark Gilbert Marpuri (in blue) and his model



Marvelous Maksim, a Kwang Tong new year, and Wild Vines' fashion drama

EXCITED found myself in Ayala Center at an early night to watch and listen to fabulous classical music played by the amazing pianist Maksim Mrvica at the world-class Greenbelt 3 Park, Makiling.

The thrilling one-hour concert showcased Maksim's intense, dramatic piano-playing skills. He played cuts from his debut album (the Mostly-Serbian) "Flight of the Bumble Bee," "Exodus," "Chopin Nocturne" and "Croatian Rhapsody," among others.

There were screams, shrieks and thunderous applauses all throughout the performance, pataygo.

In the audience were high-society faces dressed beautifully unlike everyday folks, all of them having one thing in common: a love for classical music—or, more properly, classical crossovers, as played by Maksim.

After the concert, there was a mad rush to get Maksim's CD at Music One, on the second floor of the mall.

We found time due to the enthusiastic response of the audience that night, a full-fledged Maksim concert is being considered next year.

Please, pretty please, make that concert come true for all of us, pulongges.

Maksim Live in Greenbelt was another first for the Ayala malls, which discovered so much Indon along with other sponsors like Globe Telecom, Yamaha, Joey 92.3 FM, Discovery Suites, Topnotch Marketing Corp., Asian Events Direct Solutions Inc., EMI Records and Toyota on the Square.

Early Chinese New Year

It seems like everyone is in a rush these days, dahlings.

Even the Chinese New Year has come early with the launch of Kwang Tong, super businessman George Paul's newest culinary venture, right on his very birthday.

Kwang Tong is the latest food destination in Glorietta 4's glittering constellation of restos and bars. This early, it's proving to be a major crowd-pleaser with its yummy assortment of dimsum and other authentic Cantonese dishes.

Manille's partying set came in full force and with full appetites for the Chinese New Year-themed opening, duded up in their exquisite Chinese-ness. The food as an incident promptly threw all caution caucuses to the wind to sample the resto's opening fare-lee.

A fire-dance and Buddhist ceremony came right before dinner, with the seven members of Chinese folklore offering gifts of fruit, bread and flowers in Kwang Tong's resident Buddha, while models dressed as Chinese gods and goddesses performed the parade.

Tycoon visible were top managers Michael Lo; chefs Sip Sing Bing and Arthur Tangco; and George's mother, Paula.

Traffic-stopping party girl Tessa Prieto-Valdes and stunning celebrity Cindy Kurleto were the guests of honor, and they definitely proved to be the night's most-verbal exclusives, along with the mega owners, of course.

George, who used to be active in theater, also invited some prominent stage and movie personalities, among them JJ Villaverde, Mandee Lacsamana-Wale, Sudie Gonzales, Richard Williams, Mikaela Quinsaat, Malik Bendjelloul, Nancy Cornejo, Meryl Soriano, Arnel Ignacio and talent manager Wyngard Tracy.

No extra fee, the night's best-dressed guests were rewarded for their efforts. Twins Richard and Steven Liu won second runner-up in their twin yellow outfits, while DJ Villa-

MAKSIM of our dreams. The virtuoso pianist played incredible music and charmed the audience with his winning rock-star presence.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arnaiche

Photos by Alice Van Hagen on Rinkah Mist

The Croatian pianist's recent concert at the world-class Greenbelt 3 Park was a thrilling, breathtaking experience

CROWD favorite "The Vineyard" by Dimple Lim of the Philippine International School of Fashion

MAKSIM Mrvica acknowledges the cheers of the Greenbelt 3 Park crowd

SECOND runner-up "Cuero Cruz in Rose" by Jelo Paul Mangaoang

"WILD Rose" by Anne Michelle Peñaflorida of the College of the Holy Spirit

DEAN of RP fashion Ben Farrales, with son Cesar, graced the night to offer encouragement to the young designers

EMCEES Jon Shirden and Gabi Reinoso

New breed of designers

Bora, bold and untamed—that's the best way to describe Ella Gallo's Wild Vines which, for the past years now, has been holding a fashionista night to showcase upcoming young designers.

This year was no different, pulongges. A fashion design contest called "Fashionista 2k10" was held recently, featuring the creations of big, talented student finalists from the University of the Philippines, University of Sto. Tomas, Cosa Dolorosa Career Center, College of the Holy Spirit, DLSU College of St. Benilde, Far Eastern University-Dalubhasa, French Fashion and Arts School and the Philippine International School of Fashion.

The Andronesia Group, exclusive local distributor of Wild Vines, gave all-out support as this fab event.

E&J Gallo's hotshot executives like Andy Hicks, sales director for South and Southeast Asia, and Loretta Lee, marketing manager, were joined in to witness the fashion show.

The night showcased the creativity of 10 fashion wiz who stood out from over 200 entries, as their creations addressed the question, "If Wild Vines is to make a fashion statement, what will it look like?"

What made it even more charming, pulongges, was that the fashion designs were modelled beautifully by non-professional models!

They, and the clothes they carried, were showed hastily by a large crowd of teachers, students, friends and supporters who rallied freely upon the show's cheering energy.

Many of the designs alluded to or possessed the distinct character and taste of Wild Vines' variations, like Strawberry White Enhanded, Peach Chardonnay, Blackberry Merlot and Raspberry Dalmatia.

The judges included Renee Salud, Raja Laurel, Jhie Tiap, Tetsu Ishida, Leo Reyes and me.

For all had a hard time deciding on the winner, but finally we came up with John Paul Bangoi from DP Diliman, second runner-up; Fitzgerald Gamarra from Golden Hands Institute and I, first runner-up; and Mark Gilbert Marpuri from Don Dalmacio, grand prize winner.

Garnering the "Casual Favorite" award was Dimple Lim from the Philippine International School of Fashion.

The awards were given out by Andronesia managing director for international brands Ivan Mirov, assisted by Lloyd Mirov, product manager for E&J Gallo.

Watching this show was like a glimpse into the future, pulongges. It made us hope for a time when fashion would have become, not just a way of dressing up, but a true celebration of one's individuality and the cosmopolitan way of life.

CINDY Kurleto and Kwong Poa

HIRAM Quimbao

MENCHS Liauchengco Yao and EJ Villaverde

GRACES Pua and Mike Lucanas the third prize for Sona Chinese costume to revive Richard and Steven Liu during the Kwong Tong resto opening

HERVL Santos and Malik

MODELS in traditional Chinese garb

ROSELLE Nava

WENCY Cornejo

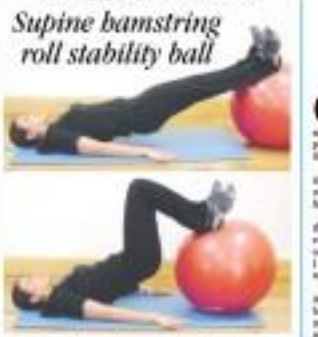
ANGELA Lanot's hip couple Teresa and Joey Hernandez

CLASSICAL music enthusiasts Jenny Sanz, Maryanne Lorenzo, and Arnold and Ruth Cu with their daughter

FELLOW Croatians cheering for Maksim at the Greenbelt 3 Park concert

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Supine hamstring roll stability ball



STRENGTHENS hips, rocks and hamstrings (back of the thighs), challenges core (abdominal) muscles.

Equipment:

Stability Ball. You can substitute a chair with wheels.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie down on the mat with your legs straight and your heels on top of the ball.

2. Press down on the ball with your heels and lift your hips.

3. Stay in the lifted position as you feel your knees and roll the ball toward your heels.

4. Do the desired reps/sets.

Performance tips:

1. This is an advanced exercise. Try it only when you are familiar with the straight leg and bent leg bridge.

2. Focus on keeping both hipbones level as you roll the ball back and forth.

3. Inhale when you roll the ball toward you, inhale when you roll the ball away from you.

Repetitions:

You have two options for doing this exercise:

a) Lift hips up, roll the ball toward you, roll the ball away from you, lower hips to the floor. This is considered one set. Do five sets.

b) Lift hips up, stay lifted as you roll the ball in and out 10 times, lower the hips to the floor.

Did ETs descend on Ciudad Verdadero?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

ON NOV. 8 and 9, during what has become known as the Harmonic Convergence, I led a small group of like-minded people on a strongly charged mystic sphere in Quezon province to raise our vibrations and meditate for world peace.

The powerful energy that descended enabled most members of the group to expand their consciousness and receive personal messages from the spirit world.

Few individuals in this country know about this cosmic event. It came and went with not even a passing mention in the mass media. The only reference made about it was a brief remark I made during my radio program about two weeks before the event.

So, what's the Harmonic Convergence? Actually, I myself was not aware of it until I began hosted Maya Daya, a sister of my former student, Marlene Bacalla, sent me an e-mail explaining it.

It turned out that the Internet had a lot of info on it. According to one source, it referred to "an astrological moment that has a diametrical pattern or opposition creating a harmonically split tidal energy and can be understood in terms in quantum complexity. It speaks of the descent of God consciousness upon this planet and offers a moment in time when humankind can make a concerted effort to rise and meet it."

It is a moment of spiritual attunement that "opens an energetic dialogue to the awareness of Mother Earth."

Like its spiritual successor, the Harmonic Convergence of 1987, the Harmonic Convergence of 2003 was also "a call to the spirit of humankind to awaken to the idea that we are, in fact, spiritual beings sharing a physical experience."

Consequently, ceremonies and celebrations in honor of this idea were scheduled at sacred places and pilgrimage places throughout the world.

I was given a message in he at a sacred place where there is strong energy that would be beamed primarily at 8 p.m. and 12 mn of Nov. 8, and at 9 a.m. of Nov. 9. The outpouring of the spirit energy would be in its peak.

I chose to go to Ciudad Verdadero, a powerful mystic place in Sampaloc near Lucban, Quezon Province. It is a 23-hectare mountainous place primarily owned and developed by businessman/environmentalist author Antonio Carnaje of Baguio.

I believe that Ciudad Verdadero is the next Baguio, with its powerful spiritual energy and presence of high spirits.

I was expecting only seven to 10 people to come during the preconvention, but the figure swelled to 20 on the day itself, including two foreigners, an Australian and a Costa Rican.

A couple from Pila, Laguna who had heard of the event on my radio program suddenly turned up in the morning of Nov. 9th. It was their 25th wedding anniversary and they wanted to celebrate it in a sacred place and to get, according to them, my blessings. How they found the sacred place, which had no sign nor direction, was a mystery to us.

Terrible sound

Immediately upon arrival at the site, we gathered at the big rock or boulder which emits very strong energy and I invoked the Pwidd Healing Meditation. As the middle of that prayer, a terrible sound, like that of a thousand cyclone or thunder, drowned my loud voice.

To some it sounded like a big engine or plane descending. The strange sound reached a crescendo and then suddenly stopped. There was dead silence except for the sound of my voice.

Then all of a sudden we were one stone. The presence of many unseen beings began to be felt by most of us gathered there.

That evening, at the multipurpose hall after dinner at least four of our companions, including a highly skeptical female medical doctor, saw two huge pairs of eyes peering from the window-like opening. They were big, extraterrestrial eyes!

Many ETs descended while we were meditating at the living rock earlier. So they were the cause of the strange sound we had heard.

At the multipurpose hall, several people began going into trance and receiving channeled messages from the spirit world, including a TV-trained reporter of ABS-CBN who was with us.

At midnight, as dressed, I led the group to meditate at the Grotto Labyrinth on top of the hill. Several more participants went into trance, including the highly skeptical female doctor. Because of the strong energy.

Individual and several messages were received by each of them. One began crying uncontrollably and experienced profound emotional catharsis.

When we looked up at the hill moon on top of us, we saw a big, strange multicolored cocoon around it. The cloud surrounding the moon turned into a circle like a circular, spinning galaxy, the same pattern that was painted spontaneously and beautifully by Nick Roerich, who never studied painting before.

Most of us slept at the multipurpose hall. Some settled at the Grotto Labyrinth till early morning. At 9 a.m., we went to meditate at the spring with miraculous healing waters; another power spot in Ciudad Verdadero.

Again, several individuals began going into trance and channeling messages from the spirit world. Most of the messages were about the need to save Planet Earth and to meditate for peace.

The messages also spoke of the assurance of ETs that they come in peace and that they exist to help mankind.

We all arrive back in Manila before noon feeling highly charged and energized. One female companion of ours entered Shen-tested me the next day saying she saw an ET in her room. It had followed her from Ciudad Verdadero.

The ET was kind and non-threatening. He wanted to communicate messages for me and for all mankind, according to her.

Whether one believes this fantastic story of what happened to us at Ciudad Verdadero is up to each reader. I sincerely a messenger.

Address letters to this column to 888 Prime Plaza 2, 1081 Lapu-Lapu St., Ermita, Manila City. Call 8-537-247 or 482-8606. E-mail (Hotmail): samuel_ccm@ph. Visit http://Channeling.tripod.com. Listen to his dzRM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

When is the best time . . .

Turn to page 17

may not make much of a difference for a recreational athlete, but may spell the difference between winning a gold or silver medal in a competitive event.

Researchers theorize that the body temperature peak between 4 and 5 p.m. may help facilitate anaerobic metabolism processes.

Neurologist Phyllis Zee of Northwestern University also believes that the best time to work out is in the late afternoon. As she explained in 2001, "The reason for that is your muscle strength is at its peak, its highest. You're going to be less likely to injure yourself. It's also a time when people are most awake and alert."

Zee further explained that body temperatures in the afternoon is between one and two degrees warmer than in the morning, making muscles in the body more supple and lessening the risk of injury.

A study by the Research Institute for Sport and Exercise Science in England found that cyclists who monitored themselves hacks performed consistently better at 5:00 p.m. than at 7:30 a.m.

However, according to the researchers, the difference cannot be explained by the increased body temperature in the afternoon, because they made the cyclists do warm-up exercises to raise morning body temperature to the same level as that in the afternoon.

Clearly, more research needs to be done to find the most optimal time for athletic performance to burn in the afternoon.

(To be continued)

Visit www.timjmurphy.com or e-mail jtmurphy@angelnet.ne

Marie-France and the Beauty of Being 18

Celebrating 18 years of Marie-France: Lorna Martin, Vikki Licauco and Jeanette Palmares (middle) with Marie-France Mabini staff

A peek inside All 18 of Marie-France's secret spot

Make a birthday wish for Marie-France! Glenn Lee, Vikki Licauco, Lorna Martin, Christine Fernandez-Bernardino and Jeanette Palmares

Remember when you were 18? Although much has changed since then, wouldn't you want to relive that light and lovely feeling by confidently revealing the traits, very current that you once had? That's exactly what Marie-France Beauty Base is encouraging women to do. Now in its 18th successful year, the country's leading no-pain, no-strain slimming solution recently celebrated its anniversary with an exclusive 3-day cocktail affair last Nov. 8 and 9 at their center. Special guests included celebrity clients Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez and Cecile Starcke with testimonial talents Jeanette Palmares-Pamaran and Vikki Santos-Licauco who shared their thoughts about Marie-France and the beauty of being 18.

"I'm optimistic but also realistic," recalls Jeanette when she was 18. "Now as I realized some of my dreams, I know I've still able to make them come true." Although she had no inconsistencies with regard to her looks when she was 18, Vikki claims, "I look a lot better now at 51 than when I was 18. I've gained the envy of everybody because, at my age, I still look good and it's with Marie-France's help!" For Cristy, turning 18 is "the year of independence. By then, I was already working as a model and as an actress." It is also the age when you become more mature. "I wanted to gain more wisdom and other things that money can't buy. Now, I'm richer, I've always enjoyed hobbies and I'm more graceful," Cristina relates the feeling of being 18 and how Marie-France recaptures it. "You're slim, you're healthier and more active. You're young again and you regain your confidence. I feel as if I'm 18 all over because of Marie-France. And it's true, you'll really slow down."

They are grateful to Marie-France for helping them to maintain their shapeliness across borders through the years. Jeanette says, "With it never can I say how thank you for making me as beautiful as I was before like I never thought I'd ever be again." Carmi adds, "I am a part of the Marie-France family. I really team them with the way they take care of the clients. I wish them the best on their 18th birthday!"

Marie-France Makati branch manager Jane Vergara remarks about Marie-France's success, "Our clients are very supportive of us because we give them the proper slimming treatments and services. I'm inviting everyone to come to Marie-France and avail of our Buy 3, Take 1 offer for the whole anniversary month of November!"

Ms. Janet Vergara presents the special anniversary package to Marie-France endorsers Vikki Licauco-Gonzalez-Romualdez and Cecile Starcke

Cristina Licauco-Gonzalez-Romualdez and Lorna Martin enjoy Marie-France's relaxing three-month package

Jane & Marie-France Makati manager Ms. Jane Vergara makes her own birthday wish during opening ceremonies for Marie-France

Have a FREE consultation at Marie-France and discover how you can benefit from their slimming services. Contact the following numbers: 806-1262 (Makati), 687-1206 (Ortigas), 372-6631 (Timog), 242-2199 (Binondo), 635-3625 (Alabang), 334-5898 (Shaw), 920-8020 (Congressional), 961-2981 (Pampanga) and 231-7637 (Cebu).

The road to feeling and looking better is not as difficult as it may seem; you just need to lose certain attitudes first

Working for your red-letter days

INSIDE OUT

Gary Quirino

IT'S good to be reminded about things that matter: health-wise and events that propagate well-being.

Each time I am approached by people bearers and audiences to one, one universal question is most often repeated: "How can I look better?"

Touch first base

• Let's begin with you. Make a date with yourself. That means at least an hour of access self-examination. Have a no holds-barred conversation with your one self, the one that needs attention and that wants to change.

• Make a covenant, with yourself. Not just an emotional pact, but one put down in writing. On a piece of paper, write down what your personal goals are. Then sign it.

Example: Goal — to lose 15 pounds in two months.

Plan: Exercise, cardio (running, swimming, aerobics, basketball, tennis), strength training, body/mind (using Yoga, Pilates, tai-chi, stretching) three times a week for one hour.

• Have yourself each day — one day, two days or three days, with three-morning enrollees. With each one you accumulate, congratulate yourself. Verbally declare, while facing the mirror, "I am getting better and better!"

• Reward yourself with non-fattening, non-'coca gilla'—a new dress, a day at the spa, a seminar on self-empowerment, a reality test course, etc.

• Create your own life affirmations. It must be personalized. Example: "Beginning today, my life will behold miracles."

Lose them

The road to feeling and looking better is not as difficult as it may seem. We must lose certain attitudes first, such as:

Fear. Telling yourself you will fail will make you fail.

Pity. Giving yourself more negative energy will make you a loser.

Frustration. It's the inability to hit bottom through and the tendency to give up too early.

Blame. Blaming others for your failures (in health, love, job, goals) exempt yourself to called somewhere.

Gain your reward

That's just phrases along the way that will build up your confidence.

Self-esteem. When you've carried these steps, you have everything to be proud about.

Greetings. Knowing you have it in you to overcome trials and challenges will make things easier.

Individualism. Being happy about yourself leads to greater successes.

Love and light!

"Total Wellness: Body, Mind & Spirit" by Neneh Herrera with Jimmy Cocoy and Gary Quirino will be on Dec. 3, 8 a.m.–5 p.m., at Manila Center, Rockwell, Makati City. Open to the public at P500 per participant (includes lunch, handouts, plus one can of Nestle Pharma). Only the first 100 callers will be accommodated. Call 8900807 local 671/3 and look for Richelle.

Basic Pranic Healing Course, Mar. 20-30. Learn to heal yourself by generating your inner power and discovering the goodness inside you. Call World Pranic Healing at 9487303 and look for Ms Faith Isleta.

"Woman, You've Got The Power," a whole day of fun and empowerment, is open for women only. Admission is free. Includes exercise competitions and lectures on makeovers, skin care, health, hormones and stress management, empowerment and women's rights. Presented by Philippine Daily Inquirer, Nestlé Purite, Nutrivit, Bare Zinnyline Mineral, Pila, Oliver's Sandwiches. Call 8536512 or 8538517.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky V. Manaloto, M.D.

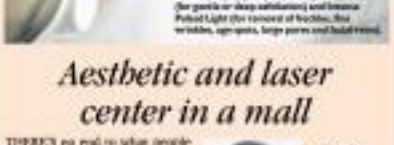
FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Do I always have to make appointments for visits to my doctor? How far in advance must they be scheduled?

Meet your MEDICard Team

Contract Signing

MEDICard is the first HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asia Pacific Region to be ISO CERTIFIED



CLARITY has state-of-the-art equipment for its specialty services such as acne surgery, sclerotherapy (for spider veins), dermabrasion (for gentle or deep exfoliation), and Intense Pulsed Light (for removal of freckles, fine wrinkles, age spots, large pores and facial veins).

Aesthetic and laser center in a mall

THERE'S no end to what people will do in the pursuit of youth and beauty. And there's no end to what medical science can do, or will promise, to meet their high-set expectations.

It was this vision of providing quality skin, body and dental care that's holistic, scientific and convenient to the public that led to the founding of Clarity Aesthetic and Laser Center at Shangri-La Plaza and SM City North EDSA.

"Clarity is manned by doctors and medical practitioners who are duly certified to their fields," says Dr. John L. Evangelista, CEO and president of Healthway Medical Clinics, Clarity's mother company.

The team is made up of professionally trained and board-certified experts in dermatology, cosmetic and plastic surgery, aesthetic dentistry and weight management.

Healthway's choice—what Evangelista describes as "hospitals without beds"—have accessible locations in malls, the convenience centers of community life and activity in urban areas, where one can have a complete executive check-up in one day and still have time to attend important board meetings in the late afternoon.

Clients are asked to go through medical, dental, diet, hormonal, psychological and lifestyle analyses, says Evangelista, before they are given treatment.

"CLARITY is manned by doctors and medical practitioners who are duly certified in their fields," says Dr. John L. Evangelista, CEO and president of Healthway Medical Clinics, Clarity's mother company

"We have state-of-the-art equipment for all our specialty services," he adds.

These include sclerotherapy (for spider veins), dermabrasion for gentle or deep exfoliation, laser treatments of warts, acne scars, skin resurfacing and skin pathologies like sarcomas and psoriasis; and Intense Pulsed Light treatments for treating freckles, fine wrinkles, age spots, large pores and facial veins.

The center's newest technology is sonodermabrasion, among others, in-person, touch bleaching (the topical in the 21st century), dental laminates, gum surgery, orthodontics and breath clinic.

Clarity Aesthetic and Laser Center is at 3/F Wellness Zone, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, and at the G/F of SM North Side Annex. Call 9349955 to 64.